



Hamilton County Soil and Water Conservation District

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hamcoswcd.org

Find us on Facebook, Instagram, and Vimeo

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

Board of Directors Meeting Minutes July 1, 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-Zoom

Shawn Hansen, Member-at-Large-Zoom

Betsy Bain, Town Supervisor

District Staff

Caitlin Stewart, District Manager

Leonard Croote, Senior District Technician

Katie WhitKovits, District Technician

Marjorie Remias, Clerk and Secretary to the

Board

Guests

Beth Hunt, Wells Town Supervisor-Zoom

Absent

Jacob Vander Pyl – Seasonal Technician

Ryan Cunningham, Associate Environmental

Analyst, Soil and Water Conservation Committee

Blanche Hurlbutt, Executive Director, New York

Association of Conservation Districts

Vacant, District Conservationist, Natural

Resources and Conservation Service

I. Call to order and Pledge of Allegiance – Buyce called the meeting to order at 9:30 a.m. Pledge of Allegiance conducted.

II. Roll call – Buyce conducted roll call.

III. Reading and approval of the June 4, 2024, meeting minutes – The minutes were provided in advance of the meeting.

- **A motion was made by Bain, seconded by Hansen to approve the June 4, 2024, meeting minutes. All voted 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. An additional expense for Tim Ellifritz in the amount of \$832.50 was received this morning. Director Bain asked about a donation we received, and thanks went out to The Lake Pleasant Sacandaga Association for this donation supporting the District's education programs.

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Balance	5/31/24	\$595,377.69
Receipts		3,710.70
Disbursements		39,207.06
Balance	6/30/24	\$559,881.33

- **A motion was made by J.M. Stortecky, seconded by Bain to accept the Treasurer’s report, and approve the bills to be paid including the invoice received today from Tim Ellifritz in the amount of \$832.50. All voted in favor, motion carried.**

V. Black River Watershed Coalition of Conservation Districts MOU – Stewart sent the MOU in advance of the meeting, and it is appended to the minutes.

- **A motion was made by Bain, seconded by Buyce to accept the Memorandum of Understanding Between and Among the Conservation Districts that Comprise the Black River Watershed Coalition, and to permit Hamilton County Soil and Water Conservation District Chairperson Victoria Buyce to sign the document. All voted in favor, motion carried.**

VI. St. Larwence River Watershed Project – Stewart reported that Chastity Miller, former Franklin County SWCD Manager and SLRWP president, has taken a new position with the Soil and Water Conservation Committee as the new AEM Base Program Manager. Her resignation has created the need of a new SLRWP president, and Stewart would like to fill that position as no other District is interested. Miller and Stewart began work on a possible funding source through Ecosystem Based Management, and Stewart wants to see that through. Additionally, Miller was working on another funding source that may help implement the Watershed Revitalization Plan.

- **A motion was made by J.M. Stortecky, seconded by Bain to support Hamilton County Soil and Water Conservation District Manager Caitlin Stewart to serve as President of the St. Larwence River Watershed Project. All voted in favor, motion carried.**

VII. Finger Lakes – Lake Ontario Watershed Protection Alliance 2024-25 Work Plan – Stewart provided the work plan in advance of the meeting and summarized it for the Directors. The work plan is appended to the minutes.

- **A motion was made by Buyce, seconded by J.M. Stortecky to approve the Finger Lakes – Lake Ontario Watershed Protection Alliance 2024-25 Work Plan and permit District Manager Caitlin Stewart to submit it to the New York State Department of Environmental Conservation. All voted in favor, motion carried.**

VIII. Resolution recommending the appointment of Beth Hunt to District Board

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RESOLUTION #2-2024

RESOLUTION RECOMMENDING THE APPOINTMENT OF BETH HUNT TO THE BOARD OF DIRECTORS OF THE HAMILTON COUNTY SOIL AND WATER CONSERVATION DISTRICT

DATED: JULY 1, 2024

BY: Ms. Bain

WHEREAS, Town of Arietta Supervisor Chris D. Rhodes resigned to ensure our board runs smoothly, due to time restrictions because of his dedication to so many other county and town committees, therefore creating a vacancy on the Board of Directors of the Hamilton County Soil and Water Conservation District, be it

RESOLVED, that the Hamilton County Soil and Water Conservation District Board of Directors does recommend to the Hamilton County Board of Supervisors the following appointment to the above said District Board:

Town of Wells Supervisor Beth Hunt to serve as Supervisors' Representative for a term commencing July 3, 2024, and terminating December 31, 2024.

SECONDED BY: Ms. Buyce and adopted by the following vote:

AYES: Mr. Stortecky, Mr. Hanson, Ms. Buyce, Ms. Bain

NAYES: None

ABSTAIN: None

ABSENT: None

IV. Terrestrial Invasive Plant Policy – Stewart reviewed the policy, and it is appended to the minutes.

- **A motion was made by Hansen, seconded by Bain to approve the Terrestrial Invasive Plant Policy. All voted in favor, motion carried.**

9:50am Lenny Croote arrived at meeting

X. Resolution honoring Chris D. Rhodes

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RESOLUTION #3-2024

HONORING CHRIS D RHODES FOR HIS EXCEPTIONAL SERVICE AS HAMILTON COUNTY SUPERVISOR OF THE HAMILTON COUNTY SOIL AND WATER CONSERVATION DISTRICT'S BOARD OF DIRECTORS

DATED JULY 1, 2024

BY: Mr. Hansen

WHEREAS, Chris D Rhodes served as a member of the Hamilton County Soil and Water Conservation District's Board of Directors since January 2023, and

WHEREAS, under his leadership, District staffing capacity expanded to include seasonal technicians, and

WHEREAS, he was responsible for overseeing the establishment and enhancement of Hamilton County Soil and Water Conservation District programs, including the: Hamilton County Trail Stewardship Program, Septic System Replacement Fund, Caring Through Conservation Mini Grant Program, Water Monitoring Program, Hydroseeding, Agricultural Environmental Management, Sediment and Erosion Control Program, Recycling Programs, Invasive Species Program, Adirondack Tree and Shrub Sale, Water Testing Program, Water Quality Coordinating Committee, and GIS Services, and

WHEREAS, with his guidance, many special projects were implemented, including the: snowmobile trail GIS project for municipalities, Warner Brook stabilization and fish passage project tree planting, Cold Stream bank stabilization project, Glimantown Road bank stabilization project, NY-LCB+ADK Aquatic Organism Passage initiative, Van Slyke Road culvert installation tree plantings, Wells Road runoff tributary diversion project, Parkhurst Road culvert replacement, and the Black River Adaptive Model, and

WHEREAS, he supported longstanding events including the Lynn Galusha Memorial Conservation Field Day, and the Hamilton County Envirothon, and

WHEREAS, under his leadership, the District received awards including New York Association of Conservation District's 2023 Best Media Educational Outreach Press Release, and recognizing Manager Caitlin Stewart for 15 years of service by the New York State Conservation District Employees' Association, and

WHEREAS, numerous grants were awarded under his leadership, including the Upper Hudson River Roadside Erosion Remediation Program Phase II (\$58,200), Elbow Creek Restoration Plan grant (\$75,000), and the Finger Lakes – Lake Ontario Watershed Protection Alliance contract (\$58,200), and

WHEREAS, his strong knowledge of natural resources and construction guided the staff to implement countless conservation practices to all corners of Hamilton County, and

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WHEREAS, his service was performed with the highest standards of integrity, and the District and County have benefited greatly from his outstanding leadership and promotion of conservation, and

WHEREAS, the Hamilton County Soil and Water Conservation District Board of Directors and staff are proud to have worked with Chris and express deep appreciation for his outstanding dedication and commitment, be it

RESOLVED, that this resolution be spread upon the minutes of the proceedings of the Hamilton County Soil and Water Conservation District as a permanent record to honor Chris D. Rhodes for his service as Director.

SECONDED BY: Ms. Buyce and adopted by the following vote:

AYES: Ms. Buyce, Ms. Bain, Mr. Hansen, Mr. Stortecky

NAYES: None

ABSENT: None

ABSTAIN: None

XI. Caring Through Conservation Mini Grant approval – Whitkovits presented a grant application from the Town of Lake Pleasant in the amount of \$2,000 for a react blade system plow to help reduce salt necessary for roads in the winter. The Town will also be contributing to the funding of this purchase. Whitkovits rated this as a 23 out of 25.

- **A motion was made by Buyce, seconded by J.M. Stortecky to approve the Town of Lake Pleasant’s Mini Grant application for a react blade system plow in the amount of \$2000. Buyce, Hansen and J.M. Stortecky in favor, Bain abstained, motion carried.**

XII. Increase petty cash from \$100 to \$200 (motion) – Stewart reported that staff have commented that \$100 is not enough petty cash to have on hand to make change for customers. Staff often use their own money to make change.

- **A motion was made by Buyce, seconded by Bain to increase petty cash from \$100 to \$200 to ensure enough money is on hand to make change for customers. All voted in favor, motion carried.**

XIII. District Activities

- a. Annual Plan of Work Quarter 2** - Stewart will email the APOW to the Directors.
- b. Directors’ comments** – Director Hansen told staff to keep up the good work.

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XIV. Staff reports – appended to minutes.

VI. Partner reports

- a. **SWCC** – appended to the minutes.
- b. **NYACD** – appended to the minutes.
- c. **NRCS** – vacant, no report submitted.

XVI. Correspondence – Stewart received a thank you from the NYS Envirothon Committee for volunteering at the recent NYS Envirothon.

XVII. Next meeting date – Tuesday, August 6, 2024, 9:30 AM, at the Hamilton County SWCD (103 County View Drive, Lake Pleasant NY 12108) and virtually on Zoom.

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

Respectfully Submitted



Marjorie Remias
Secretary to the Board/Treasurer

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

- **Administration**
 - Provided the District's 2023 annual report of the treasurer to the Hamilton County auditor.
 - Insurance for Durango
 - Scheduled presentations for all municipal board meetings in Hamilton County
 - Attended SWCC Managers' Meeting – AEM Round 18, procurement policy, the DEC general permit, and lessons learned from an OSC audit were discussed.
 - Wrote Terrestrial Invasive Plant policy
 - Staff meetings
 - Attended Katie's Safety Committee meeting
 - Sexual harassment training
 - Seeking Competition in Procurement webinar
 - Tracked performance measures that ensure our District receives state aid funding
 - Reviewed budget with Marj
 - Assisted Tim Ellifritz with computer maintenance and updates

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- Website updates
- Social media posts
- **Technical Assistance**
 - Raquette Lake property owner – Septic System Replacement Program, erosion control site visit
 - Invasive species photos - Ontario County SWCD
 - Civil Service District Technician job description – Franklin County SWCD
 - Septic System Replacement Fund – 4 inquiries
 - Water Testing Program – 2
 - JK treatment – Warren County SWCD
 - Adirondack Waterfest – 3
 - Invasive species – 3
 - Conservation education presentations – 3
 - Table and promote APIPP’s Invasive Species summit in October
 - Caring Through Conservation Mini Grant – 2
 - What the work and coordination looks like, and implementation and monitoring are being managed for the St. Lawrence River Watershed Revitalization Plan - Lauren Darcy, Great Lakes Coastal Resilience Specialist, New York Sea Grant (Cornell)
- **Watershed Coalitions**
 1. **FLLOWPA** – Finalized the work plan to be submitted to DEC, attended meeting with DEC to coordinate lake monitoring audit, coordinating Adirondack Waterfest.
 2. **Upper Hudson River Watershed Coalition** – Held the June meeting. Staff are implementing the Water Quality Improvement Project grant for the Upper Hudson River Roadside Erosion Remediation Phase II and the Non-Ag Nonpoint Source Planning grant for the Elbow Creek Assessment.
 3. **St. Lawrence River Watershed Project** – Attended a meeting with Chastity Miller and Ryan Cunningham to discuss Ecosystem Based Management funding proposal. Miller took a new position with the SWCC, and Stewart will serve as president.
 4. **Mohawk River Watershed Coalition** – Held the June meeting. The action agenda proposal contract has moved through the DEC fiscal office and OSC, and is now being reviewed for legal items. Congratulations Kathy Czajkowski on your retirement!
 5. **Black River Watershed** – Presented lake monitoring and MCed the Black River Watershed Conference at The View in Old Forge. Attended meetings to discuss the formation of the Black River Watershed Coalition of Conservation Districts.
- **Arbor Day Poetry Contest** – wrote and submitted press release announcing winners. Jacob mailed certificates to those not in attendance of the gala.
- **Conservation Education**
 - Presentations

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- Lake Monitoring – the hyperdrive version: Black River Watershed Conference, 90 attendees
- Press releases
 - Conservation District tree sales help clean climate – coordinated with SWCC Executive Director Bethany Bzduch and Commissioner of NYS Agriculture and Markets Richard Ball.
- **Septic System Replacement Fund**
 - Submitted signed participation agreement and resolution to Environmental Facilities Corps.
 - Landowner inquiries – 8
 - Team meetings to discuss application and review procedure
- **Invasive Species**
 - Took minutes at the June 20 Invasive Species Advisory Committee meeting
 - Team meeting to discuss invasive plant management
- **New York State Conservation District Employees Association**
 - Conservation Skills Workshop – coordinated drone and media trainings
 - Held the May 30 – 31 meeting
 - Completed and disseminated June CDEA News
 - Sent construction site inspections survey results to DEC
 - Met with Alan Martinez to discuss private sector interest in funding ag conservation practices in New York, invited to September CDEA meeting
 - Attended NYACD and SWCC, and Special Programs Advisory Committee meetings
 - Preparing for July meeting
 - Reviewed 4-way fund application close out forms
 - Assisted with coordinating new Ronny Raindrop costumes

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

7/10/23 Storm event

Shaw Brook Restoration Plans

Show Brook Bridge Grade Control Plans

Permits for 2024 construction season

Dugway Creek Survey and plans

Elbow Creek restoration site plans

Elbow Creek Corridor assessment

Hydroseeding

Straw

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Vehicle and equipment maintenance
Erosion site inspections
Trail Maintenance
Researched Silt Sock Filling machine

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

- Adirondack Waterfest – Friday August 2nd @ the Speculator Pavilion
 - Confirmed exhibitors include: APIPP, Oneida & Herkimer SWCDs, AWI, CCE, Hamilton County Tourism & Economic Development, Piseco Lake Association, Hamilton County Sheriffs
 - Entertainment/other: Utica Zoomobile, Herptology (reptiles), Raptors, face painting, balloon art, puppet show, kayaks & water trivia, kids sprinkler play area
 - Partnering with local businesses for specials and promotions
- Agricultural Environmental Management
 - Working with Warren and Franklin Counties to shadow AEM farm and forestry visits
 - Planning site visits in Hamilton for AEM Forestry with Franklin County
- Caring Through Conservation Mini Grant
 - We received 1 application from Town of Lake Pleasant
 - **Motion to approve**

Other

- Successful completion of June Lake Monitoring rotation. Ready for July
- Collected Galerucella beetles with Jacob for him to rear for purple loosestrife control
- Assisting Warren Co with Knotweed
- Signed up for National Envirothon
- Attended ARCPro Training in Warren County
- Held safety meeting with staff
- Many septic system replacement fund calls
- Many Japanese knotweed calls

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

Submitted by: Ryan Cunningham – Region 4 Associate Environmental Analyst

NYS SWCC News

(CAFO) Enhanced Nutrient and Methane Management Program: \$14 million has been made available for on-farm projects through Round 1 of the Concentrated Animal Feeding Operation (CAFO) Enhanced Nutrient and Methane

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Management Program (CAFO ENMP), which will help farmers protect water quality and mitigate the impacts of climate change. 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 Jason Kokkinos Jason.Kokkinos@agriculture.ny.gov by **September 5th, 2024**. Applications for funding must be submitted through the NYS SWCC SharePoint website by **5PM, October 28th, 2024**.

SWCC State Programs Advisory Committee – Recording: A recording of the June 27th, 2024, SPAC meeting has been uploaded to Sharepoint. The next SPCC meeting will convene August 29th, 2024. Details to follow soon. <https://nysemail.sharepoint.com/:f:/r/sites/Agriculture/SWCC/NYS%20SWCC%20State%20Programs%20Advisory%20Committee/June%202027,%202024?csf=1&web=1&e=qGdyqH>

June SWCC Meeting: The next meeting of the NYS Soil and Water Conservation Committee will be on **Tuesday, July 16th** starting at **10:00 AM**. 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 NCF Envirothon Call for Volunteers: The NYS Envirothon Committee is pleased to host the 2024 NCF Envirothon. The 2024 annual competition will be held from **July 28 – August 3, 2024**, at Hobart and William Smith Colleges in Geneva, New York, 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/1FAIpQLScKlG9Hyzz_wlubbce3MzPIOn-gFWG6jvMsa6H2tHjXu0MHVw/viewform

Other Events

Watershed Forestry Webinar Series: Phytoremediation for Healthy Watersheds, **July 11th, from 12–1 PM**. This July event will cover phytoremediation—the use of trees to clean contaminated soils and waters of pollutants. Register here, <https://events.gcc.teams.microsoft.com/event/41f30bb8-92fd-4904-9381-f3f201ceedcb@ed5b36e7-01ee-4ebc-867e-e03cfa0d4697>

2024 NY Soil Health and Climate Resiliency Field Days: The NY Soil Health Alliance Group will convene a series of Soil Health & Climate Resiliency Field Day’s throughout the State during 2024. Registration is now live for the **July 16th event at Moody Farms in Poestenkill, and the July 25th event at the Rodman Lott & Son Farms in Seneca Falls**. Visit, <https://www.newyorksoilhealth.org/fielddays/> for more information and to register.

2024 Annual CDEA Golf Tourney: The 23rd Annual NYS CDEA Golf Tournament is being held on **August 1st, 2024** @ Casolwood Golf Club. Anyone that is interested in playing needs to submit their registration info by **July 22nd, 2024**.

2024 NACD Northeast Regional Conference - Save the Date: This year the conference will be held in Boston, MA at the Renaissance Boston Waterfront Hotel on **August 10-14, 2024**. Further details will be available shortly.

Funding Opportunities

New Grant for Restoring Wetland and Stream Habitats: WQIP is offering a new grant for restoring and enhancing wetlands and stream corridors as habitat for fish and wildlife. The maximum grant award is \$1 million. The application deadline for WQIP Habitat Restoration and Enhancement is **July 31st, at 4PM**. <https://regionalcouncils.ny.gov/cfa>

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New York Association of Conservation Districts
c/o Steuben County SWCD
415 W. Morris Street
Bath, NY 14810

June 21, 2024

Dear Directors:

It is so hard to believe that summer is here, and everyone is so busy working on outdoor projects from stream restoration, manure pits, AEM projects, tree planting, and so much more. As summer is moving forward so are the preparations for the 2024 NCF Envirothon New York and the October 2024 NYACD Annual meeting.

2024 NYACD Annual Meeting: Is scheduled for Monday, October 21 & Tuesday, October 22, 2024, at the Hamton Inn, Penn Yan, NY. I have been busy reaching out to NRCS, Farm Bureau, Agriculture & Markets, NYS Archives, and others for potential training sessions. I have secured two sessions and working with folks on four more. We have a Yates County SWCD tour planned for Monday afternoon. Things are moving along as expected for this time of year.

NYACD By-Laws & Policies: We are reviewing and working on the NYACD By-Laws and Policies to update them and make a few changes. The By-Law changes will be provided at the NYACD annual meeting for your review and vote.

Senate Bill #S7854: I heard back from Luke at Senator May & Hinchey's office, and he is researching this bill to see if this would affect SWCD's in any way. They have had a few staff changes, so he has been a bit busy getting things together to be able to review this bill. Once Luke has had time to research the bill fully, he will reach out to me for discussion. I will keep you updated and informed.

Monthly meetings: Please remember that NYACD hosts monthly meetings on the fourth Wednesday of each month by Zoom. If you would like to join us, please let us know and I will forward you the Zoom link.

NYS Envirothon: Once again the NYS Envirothon Committee did another excellent job preparing and pulling off another successful event. The Mount Academy, Ulster County SWCD took first place and will represent New York at the 2024 NCF Envirothon which will be held at Hobart & William Smith Colleges, Geneva, NY on Sunday, July 28th - Saturday, August 3rd, 2024.

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2024 NCF Envirothon: The New York Envirothon Committee is working hard to make this the best event it can be. We have prepared and are still doing last-minute things before we host the event. The committee has been working hard to put everything in place by Sunday, July 28th.

YOU, your staff, your family, and friends are needed because we presently only have forty-five (45) volunteers. This is a weeklong even and we need of volunteers to pull this off. We need oral presentation judges, team buddies, trail guides, timekeepers, bus monitors, hosts, runners, test collectors, folks to help setup and take down at the training testing sites, as well as folks working with our activity's coordinator during all the fun activities. If you have some, half a day, full day, a couple of days or the whole week where you could help us out, we would so very much appreciate it.

As you all know this is quite an honor and responsibility for New York to host this event, so hopefully we will see you there at the opening, during the week, or travel to Niagara Falls with us, or attend the awards banquet at the end of the week.

If you would like to have a NYACD Board member join one of your monthly board meetings, please reach out to any one of us and we will be happy to attend.

Have a wonderful week and if you have any questions or need information, please contact me at 607-965-6316.

Sincerely, **Blanche** Mrs. Blanche L. Hurlbutt, NYACD Executive Director

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MEMORANDUM OF UNDERSTANDING BETWEEN AND AMONG THE CONSERVATION DISTRICTS THAT COMPRISE THE BLACK RIVER WATERSHED COALITION

A. General Purpose

The purpose of this Memorandum is to provide a mechanism for members of the Black River Watershed Coalition (BRWC) to cooperatively implement conservation within the watershed and improve natural resources on lands both public and private within the Black River Watershed.

B. Authority to Make the Understanding

The authority to make this Understanding is found under NY Soil and Water Conservation Districts Law, AN ACT establishing the State Soil and Water Conservation Committee, and creating Soil and Water Conservation Districts, constituting chapter nine-b of the consolidated laws: **§ 10.**

Cooperation between districts - The directors of any two or more districts organized under the provisions of this chapter may cooperate with one another in the exercise of any or all powers conferred in this chapter.

C. Definitions

1. The **Black River Watershed Coalition** (BRWC) consists of 5 county Conservation Districts including *Hamilton, Herkimer, Jefferson, Lewis and Oneida* in the Black River Watershed who have signed this MOU. By signing this MOU, the Conservation District becomes a voting member of the BRWC. There is only one vote per county.
2. **Conservation District** – Those Special Districts known as Soil and Water Conservation Districts in New York.
3. **Special District** – The category of agency that a Conservation District is defined as according to the US Office of Management and Budget and found more specifically on line 7 of Standard Form 424.
4. **Black River Watershed** – Consisting of tributaries, lakes, small streams and rivers that flow from Hamilton, Herkimer, Oneida and Lewis into Jefferson County outletting in Lake Ontario.
5. **Counties in the Black River Watershed** – Those counties comprising the basin defined in c, more specifically, *Hamilton, Herkimer, Jefferson, Lewis and Oneida*.

D. Considerations and Declaration of Understanding

1. Whereas, there is a need to address nonpoint source issues of pollution in the watershed by a cadre of dedicated professionals, and
2. Whereas, the conservation of natural resource and land use issues are generally best addressed in the watershed, and

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3. Whereas, the public benefits from addressing agricultural, flooding, erosion, wetland, stormwater, wildlife, invasive species and other issues in the watershed, and
4. Whereas, a regional approach provides for the formation of a network of water quality professionals, agencies, academics and nongovernmental organizations, and
5. Whereas, certain state and federal activities, funding allocations and implementation programs can be more efficiently handled on a regional basis, and
6. Whereas, a formal agreement between counties will provide a mechanism for funding and a vehicle for proving support to state and federal agencies, and
7. Whereas, Conservation Districts have the legal means to enter into multiple county agreements,

THEREFORE, the parties hereby agree to the following Memorandum of Understanding:

E. The Substantive Provisions of the Understanding

1. Administration

The Finger Lakes Lake Ontario Watershed Protection Alliance (FOLLOWPA) 3105 State Rte 3, Fulton, NY 13069 will administer the finances of the BRWC, keeping separate books and following generally accepted accounting procedures. The FOLLOWPA will generally take the lead for entering into contracts on behalf of BRWC, but it does not preclude other Districts from administering contracts and hiring staff on behalf of the BRWC as appropriate.

2. BRWC structure and function

The voting members will develop work plans, policies, set priorities, hire staff and or contractors to support the purpose. The voting members will generally have equal responsibilities and obligations in supporting this MOU.

3. Funding

The voting members will have equal responsibility, obligations, and approval for all funding relevant to this Understanding. Those contracts can cite this Understanding as the basis for which the contract was initiated.

4. Obligations

This Understanding provides the framework for multi-county projects through the Conservation Districts. Legal responsibility for any contracts will remain with the specific entities named in the contract and not the entire BRWC membership.

5. Purpose

The BRWC will use this Understanding to support all relevant aspects of local, state and federal watershed and water quality efforts.

Examples of these components include, but are not limited to:

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- a. Assessing farms, developing farm plans and implementing appropriate best management practices, supported by the NY Agricultural Environmental Program,
- b. Supporting various federal programs,
- c. Developing and implementing stream, road ditch, road bank and other stream corridor and floodplain restoration projects,
- d. Planning and implementing various wetland restoration activities,
- e. Planning and implementing forestry related practices, especially as they relate to nutrient and sediment reduction,
- f. Implementing and supporting municipalities regarding stormwater practices,
- g. Developing and conducting water quality and quantity monitoring activities,
- h. Supporting local watershed residents in developing subwatershed management plans, and
- i. Supporting research activities of academic partners.
- j. Invasive Species
- k. Education & Outreach

F. Scope of the Understanding

1. Territorial extent

This Understanding covers projects within the Black River Watershed.

2. County control

Nothing in this Understanding will usurp the right of a Conservation District to be in control of activities within its jurisdiction.

3. Other Understandings

Nothing in this Understanding will usurp the right of a Conservation District to enter into other Understandings with other entities.

G. Monitoring and Evaluation Procedures

1. Procedures to monitor activities.

- a. The BRWC will hold bi-monthly meetings (every 2 months) and require minutes to be distributed to members, including all who are covered under this Understanding.
- b. The BRWC will write an annual summary of activities as appropriate.

2. Long-term implementation stability.

As appropriate, any contract or agreement developed under this Understanding will detail specific tasks and responsibilities between the contracting parties and assign a BRWC project manager responsible for reporting progress as described in G1b. Project managers will be BRWC member employees. The BRWC will be responsible for the direction and oversight of all project agreements and reporting to FLOWPA.

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H. General Provisions Regarding the MOU

1. Commencement of the Understanding.

This Memorandum shall become effective for each member immediately upon signing.

2. Review of this Understanding.

BRWC member counties will review this Understanding periodically or at the request of a member.

3. Modification

Any BRWC member can suggest changes to this Understanding. Any changes must be in writing and agreed to by all BRWC members. Should this not occur, then the entity can opt out as described under H4 "Termination".

4. Termination

This Understanding allows for unilateral termination by any BRWC member. To opt out a member must provide a written notice to the BRWC. A thirty-day notice in advance is required.

5. Remedial provisions in the event of breach of this MOU.

The BRWC members will solicit a third neutral party to act as a mediator to resolve any real or perceived breaches of this MOU. Possible parties include the NY State Soil Water Conservation Committee. Should the issue not be resolved any and all members have the right to terminate this Understanding as described in H4.

6. If appropriate, the members may Dissolve the BRWC as they see fit.

Upon termination or dissolution of the BRWC any assets lawfully available for distribution shall be distributed to one or more qualifying organizations described in Section 501c(3) of the Internal Revenue Code of 1986 (or described in any corresponding provision of any successor statute) which organization or organizations have a charitable purpose which, at least generally, includes a purpose similar to the terminating or dissolving corporation.

The organization to receive the assets of the BRWC hereunder shall be selected by the discretion of a majority of the managing body of the BRWC and if its members cannot so agree, then the recipient organization shall be selected pursuant to a verified petition in equity filed in a court of proper jurisdiction against the BRWC by one or more of its managing body which verified petition shall contain such statements as reasonably indicate the applicability of this section. The court upon a finding that this section is applicable shall select the qualifying organization or organizations to receive the assets to be distributed, giving preference if practicable to organizations located within the State of New York.

In the event that the court shall find that this section is applicable but that there is no qualifying organization known to it which has a charitable purpose, which, at least generally, includes a purpose similar to this corporation, then the court shall direct the distribution of its assets lawfully available for distribution to the Treasurer of the State of New York to be added to the general fund.

I. Miscellaneous

1. Legal Enforceability.

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This MOU does not create legal enforceable duties.

2. Third party beneficiary.

The parties to this Understanding do not intend to create in any individual or entity the status of third party beneficiary and this MOU should not be construed so as to create such status.

3. Entirety of Understanding. 6

The entire Understanding is contained in this document, including any appendices, if any.

4. FOIA and FOIL

To the extent that information is subject to the Freedom of Information Act, the contact is the Finger Lakes Lake Ontario Protection Alliance, 315-673-7148.

5. Severability

Should any portion of this MOU be determined to be illegal and void, or otherwise determined impossible to perform, that section shall be severed, and the remainder of the MOU shall continue in full force and effect, and the parties may renegotiate the terms effected by the severance.

The following Conservation Districts who sign this MOU do hereby constitute the Black River Watershed Coalition:

Hamilton _____ Date _____
District Board Chair

Herkimer _____ Date _____
District Board Chair

Jefferson _____ Date _____
District Board Chair

Lewis _____ Date _____
District Board Chair

Oneida _____ Date _____
District Board Chair

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FLLOWPA Work Plan: 2024 - 2025

SCHEDULE A – PROGRAM NARRATIVE

A. Definition of Water Quality Problem(s)

The relatively clean water of lakes and rivers within the Hamilton County portion of the Finger Lakes – Lake Ontario watershed is not without problems. Pollution including acid rain; de-icing agents; fertilizers; unstable road ditches and stream banks; septic system inputs; invasive species; development; and improper shoreline management threaten watershed health. Hamilton County’s economy is sustained by tourism. Year round and seasonal residents are attracted to the county’s natural resources. Watershed stressors threaten the quality of local and downstream waters, and our residents’ livelihood.

As stated in the Hamilton County Water Quality Strategy, the Water Quality Coordinating Committee (WQCC) feels it is critical to maintain an ongoing, watershed-wide identification, assessment, and reporting program within the county. This workplan proposal supports monitoring lake and stream water quality; educating residents on stormwater management and septic system maintenance; assisting county and town municipal governments with implementing erosion control, flood mitigation, and climate resiliency best management practices; and addressing aquatic and terrestrial invasive species. The critical data that is collected can be used to further quantify water quality impairments in Finger Lakes – Lake Ontario waterbodies in Hamilton County on the Department of Environmental Conservation’s Priority Waterbody List (PWL).

One threat to the Hamilton County portion of the Finger Lakes – Lake Ontario watershed is invasive species. A cooperative effort by the Hamilton County Soil and Water Conservation District together with the New York State Department of Environmental Conservation (DEC), the Adirondack Park Agency (APA), the Adirondack Park Invasive Plant Program (APIPP), and area Partnerships for Regional Invasive Species Management (PRISM) will focus on surveying lands and waters for invasive species, mapping and prioritizing invasions, management, and educational outreach. Prevention will be focused on Tier 1 species such as round goby, Asian longhorned beetle and spotted lanternfly. Eradication will be focused on Tier 2 species such as giant hogweed, water chestnut, and mile-a-minute. Containment will be focused on Tier 3 species such as spiny waterflea, Japanese stilegrass, and hemlock woolly adelgid. Suppression will be focused on Tier 4 species such as common reed grass, Eurasian watermilfoil, emerald ash borer, purple loosestrife, knotweed spp., and yellow iris.

A second threat to the Hamilton County portion of the Finger Lakes – Lake Ontario watershed is sedimentation and erosion. Implementing effective erosion control, flood mitigation, and climate resiliency practices in the watershed will have a positive impact on water quality. Best management practices will be implemented to stabilize road ditches and stream banks, mitigate the adverse impacts of floods, and promote climate resiliency. Efforts will focus on identifying, prioritizing, monitoring, and controlling sedimentation and erosion. Best management practices may include hydroseeding, green armoring, natural channel design, bioengineering, or culvert design and installation. District staff hold North Atlantic Aquatic Connectivity Collaborative (NAACC) certification that allows for the precise channel width measurements to size culverts correctly to meet Department of Environmental Conservation and Army Corps of Engineers specifications, mitigate floodwater damage, and promote aquatic passage. Certified Professional Erosion Sediment Control (CPESC)

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certification affords the District a higher level of credibility to address erosion and sediment control issues throughout the watershed, with priorities placed on stormwater control, soil stabilization, and erosion control.

A third threat to the Hamilton County portion of the Finger Lakes – Lake Ontario watershed is point and non-point source pollution from contributors like fertilizer, de-icing agents, oil, grease, atmospheric deposition, wastewater treatment plants, and effluent from faulty septic systems. Efforts will focus on educational outreach; septic system improvements, the Lake Monitoring Program; and DEC's WAVE.

With guidance and support from the Water Quality Coordinating Committee, the Hamilton County Soil and Water Conservation District will work to accomplish the stated goals and objectives using the following program approach.

B. Program Approach

All water quality monitoring and measurement activities conducted in the field or laboratory will be performed in accordance with the approved NYSDEC - FLOWPA Quality Assurance Management Plan and program specific Quality Assurance Project Plans (QAPP). A QAPP will be developed and submitted for NYSDEC approval for lake monitoring programs prior to initiation of the monitoring program. Sample analysis will be performed by a laboratory certified by the New York State Department of Health (NYSDOH) Environmental Laboratory Approval Program (ELAP).

Goal 1. Assess, Monitor and Protect Water Quality

Objective A: Evaluate water quality of lakes using available resources and Quality Assurance and Quality Control protocol

The project objective of the Hamilton County Lake Monitoring Program is to collect baseline lake data for the effective analysis of long-term trends. The data will be used to document the current limnological condition of each lake and determine if any significant changes in water quality are occurring over time. Additionally, water quality data will allow scientists, county agencies and partners to manage lakes more efficiently and alleviate pollution problems. The Hamilton County Soil and Water Conservation District staff will continue to collect lake water samples on high priority waterbodies throughout the year. A contracted, ELAP certified lab will complete lake water quality testing for parameters that may include chlorophyll-*a*, alkalinity, nitrate-nitrite as N, total nitrogen, ammonia as N, chloride, total phosphorus, dissolved organic carbon, total calcium, total sodium, pH, conductivity, color, CDOM, and sulfate. Water samples are collected at the deepest point of each lake at 1.5 meters below the surface, and bottom water samples are collected on lakes with previously confirmed harmful algal blooms. A YSI ProDSS Multiparameter Meter is used to collect profile data for pH; temperature; depth; dissolved oxygen; conductivity; and chlorophyll. The data collected by the ProDSS Total Algae Sensor PC Freshwater can indicate an increase or abundance of algae throughout the water column. These increases could signify the beginnings of a Harmful Algal Bloom, and District staff can further investigate this threat to water quality as needed. The data will be analyzed, and reports will be created and distributed to appropriate agencies and partners. District staff will work with the Department of Environmental Conservation to pilot the Environmental Protection Agency's Water Quality Exchange (WQX) portal for the data submission process. Additionally, Hamilton County Lake Monitoring Program data will be incorporated

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into the Black River Adaptive Modeling (BRAM) Project. The 2016 Black River 9 Element plan was developed at the HUC11-scale, which has since been catalogued as legacy (no longer available to track watershed management implementation). This makes tracking projects and progress within priority subwatersheds difficult, such as agricultural best management practices. The BRAM project will facilitate effective Black River Watershed Management Plan/9 Element plan implementation, leverage state and federal funding, protect drinking water sources, improve impaired waterbodies, and update the Black River 9 Element Watershed Plan with current conditions and watershed management needs. Phase I (current phase): Engage with the public, review existing data, identify data needs, and identify water quality monitoring needed to support the watershed model. Phase II (planned): Integrate additional monitoring and develop an adaptive watershed model at the HUC12 scale to evaluate trends and address challenges to the 9 Element Plan implementation. This phase is not yet funded.

Objective B: Increase public awareness regarding water quality and conservation concerns

For long lasting change, it is imperative to educate the county's seasonal and full-time residents and visitors about watershed dynamics, lake ecosystems, stormwater, and non-point source pollution. They need to understand how their actions affect water quality to make informed decisions that can reduce pollution. The Hamilton County Soil and Water Conservation District will provide educational materials on the effective management of traditional septic systems to lake associations and the public. Septic system dye kits and instructions are available for homeowners. Shoreline management information is also distributed to lake associations in addition to providing property owners a self-evaluation guide. The "Conservation Corner" newsletter highlights water quality topics and is distributed to the email contact list, Hamilton County supervisors, residents, and visitors.

Upon request, the Hamilton County Soil and Water Conservation District will assist lake associations, universities, municipalities, and other partners by taking additional water samples and assisting with water sampling; providing data and water quality guidance and recommendations; creating outreach materials; and giving presentations.

Objective C: Water Testing Program

Hamilton County residents and business owners can find out if their drinking and swimming water is safe. The District took over the Well Water Testing Program from the Village of Speculator when they were no longer able to offer the service. As water quality is such a strong concern for the District, the Water Testing Program is hosted annually during the summer months. The District partners with the Mohawk Valley Water Authority (MVWA), whose lab holds an accreditation certificate from New York (ELAP ID: 10319). Because Hamilton County is remote, this service saves residents drive time and money, and has been met with great support from town supervisors. Monitoring sites are dependent on those interested landowners in Hamilton County who wish to have their drinking or swimming water tested; the program is voluntary.

MVWA test kits and instructions are available at various locations throughout the county. Landowners pick up a kit, collect the water sample per MVWA instruction, and drop the sample off at the District on designated dates from 8:30 AM – 12 PM. District staff pack samples on ice in coolers to maintain appropriate temperature during delivery, then drop samples off that same afternoon to the MVWA lab. MVWA performs the water

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analysis, and sends results directly to each landowner.

Test kits are available for:

- Total coliform / *E. coli* qualitative and quantitative for chlorinated and unchlorinated water
- Lead and copper
- Water quality panel (alkalinity, total hardness, calcium hardness, fluoride, chloride, and conductivity)

Objective D. Septic System Program

Septic systems are a topic of concern for landowners and municipalities. Some municipalities are working to enact septic system inspection laws. Lake associations are concerned about the adverse impacts that failing septic systems can have on water quality. The District recognizes these concerns, and helps in a number of ways. A District staff member is certified in the Onsite Wastewater Treatment System Network (OTN) and completed a comprehensive training that focused on understanding septic system components, regulatory updates, and how to maintain a healthy environment. This level of expertise allows this staff member to consult with towns and civic associations regarding the establishment of local laws and growing septic system concerns. Through the District's Septic System Inspection Program, home or business owners voluntarily contact our District requesting a septic system inspection. The septic system inspection occurs before and after tank pump-out on the same day. District staff collect data on the current condition of the leach field and septic system, and a map is created showing the location of the system. The report is provided to the home or business owner, a record is kept at the District, and a copy is sent to municipalities upon request.

Objective E. Support DEC's WAVE

District staff have historically collected benthic macroinvertebrates to assess stream health. We will support DEC's Water Assessments by Volunteer Evaluators program by collecting benthic macroinvertebrates from priority streams and submitting data.

Goal 2. Survey and Manage Invasive Species

Objective A: Identify, monitor, and manage invasive species

The Hamilton County Soil and Water Conservation District staff will survey lands and waters for invasive species and document their locations and associated data using GIS and iMAP Invasives. Invasive species sites will be prioritized, and staff will select the best management practice to implement for the target species. Staff maintain pesticide applicator certification. This objective will be in conjunction with APIPP, DEC, APA, and area PRISMs.

Objective B: Increase public awareness of invasive species

District staff will develop and disseminate educational materials including fact sheets, brochures, and signs throughout the county, at local events, at our office, and on our website, and social media pages. We will participate in Invasive Species Awareness Week. Focus areas will include spread prevention, biology, adverse impacts, landscaping with native plants, and best management practices. Presentations will continue to be offered to schools, municipalities, and civic organizations. Press releases and articles for the District's Conservation Corner newsletter will highlight invasive species topics. The District will assist lake associations and other organizations with outreach material development and management efforts.

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Goal 3. Address Sediment and Erosion Concerns

Objective A: Implement and review the Sediment and Erosion Control Program

The Sediment and Erosion Control Program will be implemented to assist county and town departments, local contractors, and landowners with reducing sedimentation and erosion and addressing flood and climate resiliency. Trainings and one-on-one site visits will educate contractors, landowners, and municipal crews on the importance of effective erosion control practices. Educational materials will be distributed about stormwater management including Phase II regulations. District staff will assist landowners and municipalities with the development, installation, and maintenance of green infrastructure and stormwater control projects. Working in conjunction with highway departments, District staff will utilize the hydroseeder for road bank stabilization projects. This will allow for quick and efficient stabilization of roadside ditches and other disturbed areas to reduce sediment loading into waterways.

District staff will install streambank and shoreline stabilization projects to address flood and climate resiliency and decrease sediment and erosion. Methods may include natural channel design, hydroseeding, bioengineering, or green armoring.

Objective B: Watershed Protection Program

It is of the utmost importance for watershed communities to be proactive instead of reactive when addressing flood resiliency, invasive species, climate change, and water quality and quantity threats. District staff will inventory watershed features including roads, banks, and stream crossings for data that may include GPS coordinates, slope, vegetation, invasive species, total area of erosion, soil type, cause of erosion, man-made structures, connection to surface water, outfall, suggested BMPs, and cost estimates. Upon completion, inventory data will be accessible via an online mapping system to help municipalities and other partner agencies prioritize projects. The Watershed Protection Program will inventory post-storm damage, and establish flood and climate resiliency priorities. In the future, funds may be used to cost share high priority projects.

Objectives listed in this work plan support the Climate Action Council's Scoping Plan through the following:

- 1.1 Climate Action
 - Warming trends and incidences of intense heat waves will contribute to greater localized heat stresses; heavy rainfall events that exacerbate localized flooding will continue to impact food production, natural ecosystems, and water resources; and sea-level rise will increasingly threaten sensitive coastal communities and ecosystems.
- 8.2 Climate Change Impacts on Public Health
 - Increased risk for food- and water-borne diseases due to increasing temperatures
 - Flooding and Increased risk for vector-borne diseases (such as Lyme disease, West Nile virus, and other pathogens).
- 15.2 Improve Soil Health, Nutrient Management, and Agroforestry
 - Improve water and air quality; provide storm and flood mitigation.
- Adaptation and Resilience: Enhance Community and Infrastructure Resilience

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- Strategies include expanding State support for regional and local planning, assisting municipalities and local communities in their efforts to incorporate future conditions into local planning and regulatory decisions, addressing risks of flooding and extreme heat, and ensuring resilience of the energy system. Implementation of all components of these strategies should prioritize the use of natural resources and nature-based features to enhance resilience.

Funding from several sources is needed to achieve these important goals and objectives. The Hamilton County Board of Supervisors understands the importance of water quality monitoring, invasive species management, and sediment and erosion control. The county funds a large portion of the District budget. New York State supports the District’s diverse programs and services through an annual reimbursement. These funding sources, in conjunction with FLOWPA, get conservation on the ground in Hamilton County, and protect valuable water resources.

The Hamilton County Soil and Water Conservation District’s knowledgeable and experienced staff members work to achieve the program goals detailed in this FLOWPA Annual Work Plan. The critical nature of protecting our water resources requires consistency in assessing, monitoring, and protecting water quality, surveying and managing invasive species, addressing sediment and erosion concerns, and educating the public. Program expenses funded by FLOWPA are directly related to the goals and objectives in this narrative.

SCHEDULE B – BUDGET

Please list your proposed expenses using the following categories:

Personnel	\$70,000	this line item is for your staff time (full and part time) to implement your FLOWPA program including your fringe benefits
Supplies	\$31,200	
Travel	\$6,000	
Equipment	\$10,000	
Contractual	\$20,000	this line item is for all outside consultants, vendors, and/or contractors you hire to perform FLOWPA-related work

Total allocation for SFY 2024-25 is \$137,200 per County

Program Summary Table

Type of Work	Installation and Implementation of Best Management Practices	Watershed Monitoring	Public Education and Outreach	Invasive Species Control and Eradication	Technical Assistance
Work Plan Tasks	Implement and review the	Evaluate water quality of	Increase public	Increase public awareness of	Septic System Program.

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	Sediment and Erosion Control Program.	lakes using available resources and Quality Assurance and Quality Control protocol. Water Testing Program.	awareness regarding water quality and conservation concerns.	invasive species. Identify, monitor, and manage invasive species in conjunction with APIPP, DEC, and APA.	Stream Crossing Program.
Water Quality Problem(s)	Unstable road ditches and banks, unstable shorelines, soil erosion, sedimentation, non-point source pollution, stormwater pollution, climate change, floods. Unstable streambanks, soil erosion, sedimentation, non-point source pollution, climate change, and floods.	Acid rain, deicing agents, non-point source pollution, unstable road ditches and banks, unstable shorelines, sedimentation, erosion, septic system pollution, climate change, floods.	Acid rain, deicing agents, non-point source pollution, unstable road ditches and streambanks, septic system pollution, improper shoreline management, streambank erosion, climate change, floods, and sedimentation.	Invasive species infestations and spread.	Septic system pollution, unstable streambanks and shorelines, soil erosion, sedimentation, non-point source pollution, climate change, and floods.
Budget (Total: \$137,200)	\$42,750.00	\$62,500.00	\$12,750.00	\$13,750.00	\$5,450.00

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Terrestrial invasive plant management policy

Background

The Hamilton County Soil and Water Conservation District staff and Board of Directors set terrestrial invasive plant management as a priority in the Annual Plan of Work. Invasive species tiers were established by Partnerships for Regional Invasive Species Management to guide management priorities regionally and across New York State (see chart below).

Invasive Species Tiers
Standardized species lists for each PRISM

		Difficulty of Eradication / Cost of Control Abundance (In PRISM plus Buffer)			
		None in PRISM	Low (Eradication/ Full containment may be feasible)	Medium (Strategic management to contain infestations and slow spread in PRISM)	High (Established/widespread in PRISM; only strategic localized management)
Impact (current and future)	Very High or High	TIER 1 <i>Early Detection/Prevention</i> Highest level of early detection survey efforts. Should conduct delineation surveys and assign to appropriate Tier if detected. a) Inside buffer, but not in PRISM b) Outside PRISM and Buffer, but close (eastern North America) c) Far outside PRISM and buffer (not in east NA), but introduction pathway exists	TIER 2 <i>Eradication</i> Highest level of early detection response efforts. High impact species with low enough abundance and suitable treatment method available to make eradication feasible within the PRISM. Need delineation surveys to determine extent.	TIER 3 <i>Containment</i> Target strategic management to slow the spread, as likely too widespread for eradication, but many surrounding regions could be at risk if left unattended. For plants, use the IPMDAT. Possible eradication candidate only if adequate resources and effective control methods available.	TIER 4 <i>Local Control</i> Eradication from PRISM not feasible; focus on localized management over time to contain, exclude, or suppress to protect high-priority resources like rare species or recreation assets. Be strategic when deciding if / where to control.
	Medium	<i>Evaluate (Medium Impact)</i> Further evaluate impacts and PRISM resources to see if the species should be assigned to one of the other lists. If this species could feasibly become high impact with climatic or other environmental changes, consider moving to the appropriate High Impact row based on abundance. If too little is known, consider moving to "Monitor".			
	Unknown	X	TIER M <i>Monitor</i> Species that need more research, mapping, and monitoring to understand their invasiveness. This includes naturalized species and cultivated-only species that are known to be invasive in other regions but are not yet invasive here. Invasiveness may change with environmental or genetic changes. Should monitor populations on a regular basis to see if they are starting to become invasive and assign to appropriate Tier if invasive infestations detected.		

Tier definitions were formalized in 2017 by the NYS invasive species network of PRISMs, state agencies, and NYNHSP.

Buffer: An area chosen by the PRISM that surrounds the PRISM and takes in certain counties, states and provinces. Most PRISMs are using about 100 miles as the buffer.

Impact: Use the PRISM-specific invasiveness rankings if available, or use NYS ranks (see nysis.info for existing ranks). For species that are not ranked yet, or PRISM-specific adjustments of state ranks are deemed necessary, use expert opinion and document justification. Low-impact species not included since cannot justify spending resources to control these.

Abundance: This is left as a qualitative metric, since assigning standardized values to categories is not feasible due to the diversity of species dispersal strategies and data gaps.

This ranking system takes into account populations that have escaped into natural areas, but not intentionally (and legally) distributed individuals. For example, a landscape planting would not be counted.

Scientific evidence documents that terrestrial invasive plants cause economic, ecologic, and societal harm. Once established, the “early detection and rapid response” method is the most successful at mitigating impacts and achieving successful eradication. As an invasive plant stand proliferates, so does the cost, effort, and time it takes to manage, and eradication may never be possible.

Historically, District staff have managed invasive plants on public, private, and municipal lands.

Pre-Project Planning

Before managing terrestrial invasive plants, District staff will develop a management plan, budget, and establish project goals and objectives to ensure desired outcomes are realistic, cost effective, and measurable.

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Potential project sites will be evaluated using the below framework:

1. Assess the relative threat of the species in consideration of management
2. Determine whether an economic, ecologic, or societal asset would be put at risk of the species infestation were left unmanaged
3. Evaluate whether effective tools are available to manage the infestation and any potential source of reintroduction
4. Determine if sufficient resources are available to complete the project
5. Determine if expenditure will result in a high return on investment over a five to ten year period

Project Implementation and Monitoring

If the project is determined to be viable based on the pre-project framework, and all best management practice options have been examined, District staff will implement the management strategy best suited for the location and species. Annual monitoring and management over consecutive years is often required to successfully reduce or eradicate terrestrial invasive plants. Post-management field work includes revisiting sites annually at the appropriate time of the growing season for at least five years or until no invasive species have been documented for at least three consecutive years, and managing any new growth or regrowth as needed.

District staff will use iMAP invasives to document invasive species and track management success via reduction in invasive species abundance (extent, percent cover, density, number of plants) as well as the reestablishment of native species over time.

Permitting and Herbicide Requirements

Terrestrial invasive plant management may be subject to one or more permits from state agencies and/or departments. Site conditions and special circumstances will be considered that may trigger permitting from regulatory agencies.

Any District staff member treating invasive plants with herbicide must follow the New York State Department of Environmental Conservation's requirements for certified pesticide applicator and / or technician.

Knotweed spp. Management Requirements

Annually, District staff will establish a list of priority management sites of invasive knotweed species based on the below criteria for review and approval by the Board of Directors:

1. The site is 100 feet or less from a waterbody
2. The site was previously managed and needs to be re-treated for regrowth or new growth
3. The site is on municipal property
4. The site is on forest preserve land
5. Other special circumstances reviewed and approved by District staff and the Board of Directors