



## Hamilton County Soil and Water Conservation District

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[www.hamcoswcd.org](http://www.hamcoswcd.org)

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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

### August 6, 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

Beth Hunt, Town Supervisor

Betsy Bain, Town Supervisor, virtual

Shawn Hansen, Member-at-Large, virtual

#### District Staff

Caitlin Stewart, District Manager

Marjorie Remias, Clerk and Secretary to the Board

Katie WhitKovits, District Technician, virtual

#### Absent

Leonard Croote, Senior District Technician

Jacob Vander Pyl, Seasonal Technician

District Conservationist, Vacant, Natural

Resources and Conservation Service

Ryan Cunningham, Associate

Environmental Analyst, Soil and Water

Conservation Committee

**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 July 1, 2024, meeting minutes** – The minutes were provided in advance of the meeting.

- **A motion was made by Buyce, seconded by J.M. Stortecky to approve the July 1, 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 noted that the Certificates of Deposits had matured and were cashed out and presented information to the board about NYCLASS as an alternative investment option. The board will review and decide whether to join at the next meeting.

<b>Balance</b>	<b>6/30/24</b>	<b>\$559,881.33</b>
<b>Receipts</b>		<b>6,888.39</b>
<b>Disbursements</b>		<b>36,092.30</b>

**Balance                      7/31/24                      \$530,677.42**

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

**V. District Technician job announcement** – Stewart reported that with the current workload, the team is overprescribed and she proposed hiring another full-time technician. Stewart would like to proceed with advertising a vacancy and reviewing starting salary recommendations.

- **A motion was made by Buyce, seconded by J.M. Stortecky to permit District Manager Caitlin Stewart to advertise a District Technician vacancy at a starting salary range of \$38,000 to 45,000, and proceed with application reviews and interviews, and bring a recommendation forward to the board at the September meeting. All in favor, motion carried.**

**VI. Preliminary 2024 budget discussion – Hamilton County allocation request** – Stewart reported that the SWCD 2025 budget request is due to budget officer Barry L. Baker by September 13. Discussion ensued about the increase.

- **A motion was made by Bain, seconded by J.M. Stortecky to permit Stewart to request a 4% increase for the 2025 Hamilton County budget allocation. All voted in favor, motion carried.**

**VII. Compost sock filler machine** – Tabled.

**VIII. Conservation Skills Workshop registration** – Stewart reported that the 2023 Conservation Skills Workshop will be held September 23 – 26 in Auburn. This is a field-based, hands-on training session. Stewart is co-presenting the Culture of Conservation Communication: A Media Training on September 24 and coordinated the I Just Wanna Fly – Drone Regulations, Safety, and Fly Time session. WhitKovits is coordinating lodging for attendees.

- **A motion was made by J.M. Stortecky, seconded by Buyce to permit Lenny Croote, Katie WhitKovits, Jacob Vander Pyl, and Caitlin Stewart to register for the 2024 Conservation Skills Workshop in the amount of \$200.00 per attendee. All voted in favor, motion carried.**

**IX. Terrestrial invasive plant management approval** – Stewart reported that per the newly adopted procedure, Croote is seeking approval to treat Japanese knotweed on private property.

- **A motion was made by Hansen, seconded by Buyce to permit certified pesticide applicators Lenny Croote and Katie WhitKovits to treat Japanese knotweed on the following private properties: Judith L. Peck, Richard Wilt, Matt Wilt, Linda Shortleff, Franklin W. Corutney, Morrison j. Hosley, Emily J. Farr, Evergreen Lake Inc (Chris Rhodes). All voted in favor, motion carried.**

**X. Logo** – Tabled until September.

**XI. Caring Through Conservation Mini Grant application approval** – Stewart reported that WhitKovits did not receive any applications.

**XII. District activities** - Manager Caitlin Stewart requested an abbreviated meeting due to a family emergency. She will send the Board a report on Distract Activities, and it will be appended to the minutes. Buyce welcomed Town of Wells Supervisor Beth Hunt to the Hamilton County SWCD’s board of directors.

**XIII. Staff reports** – Stewart will email copies of the staff reports.

**XIV. Partner reports** –

- a. District Conservationist’s report – No report, position vacant.
- b. New York State Soil and Water Conservation Committee report – appended to minutes.

**XV. Correspondence** - To be reviewed in September.

**XVI. Next meeting date** – September 3, 2024, 9:30 AM, at the Hamilton County SWCD (103 County View Drive, Lake Pleasant NY 12108) and virtually on Zoom.

**Other** – Stewart reported that Croote contacted Hydrograsscorp and they offered \$14,500.00 for our used Finn T75T Hydroseeder when the new machine arrives. Croote believes we could do better on Auctions International and would like approval to list when the time comes.

- **A motion was made by J.M. Stortecky, seconded by Bain to approve Croote listing our Hydroseeder on Auctions Internation when he is ready. All voted in favor, motion carried.**

**XVII. Adjournment**

- **A motion was made by J.M. Stortecky, seconded by Buyce to adjourn the meeting at 9:45a.m. All in favor, carried.**

Respectfully Submitted



Marjorie Remias  
Secretary to the Board/Treasurer

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

● **Administration**

- Researched NY Class
- Researched new overtime rules
- Registered in the new SFS grants system
- Preparations for new board member
- Assisted Lenny with paycheck advancement due to personal bank account fraud
- Designed District banner for outreach events
- Researched cyber security
- Staff meetings
- Staff performance appraisals
- Tracked performance measures that ensure our District receives state aid funding
- Reviewed budget with Marj
- Assisted Tim Ellifritz with computer maintenance and updates
- Website updates
- Social media posts

● **Grants**

- WQIP Grant Application – The entire team worked hard to complete and submit a Department of Environmental Conservation Water Quality Improvement Project Program grant in the amount \$186,212.50 for the Hamilton County Roadside Stabilization and Erosion Prevention Program. Lenny provided photos and verbiage, Jacob researched erosion prevention BMPs, Katie provided photos, Marj proofread, and I wrote the majority of the content. I congratulate the team on a job well done and hope the grant will rank high enough to be funded.
- Overseeing Non-Ag Nonpoint Source Planning grant for the Elbow Creek Assessment, signed forms for quarterly report.

● **Technical Assistance**

- Forestry storm assessment tool research
- Lake Algonquin – water should be received in an acceptable manner, engage government, friends, and concerned folks to come up with a more thoughtful plan for the future.
- Provided contact for AWI Stewardship Program to Lake Pleasant Sacandaga Association
- Provided lake monitoring data, Septic System Inspection Program, and Caring Through Conservation mini-grant information to Michele Curry, President, Blue Mountain Lake Association Water Watch.
- 10 questions on erosion and sediment control, invasive plant management with herbicides, water quality, HABs, and duck itch at the Blue Mountain Lake Association's Water Watch meeting

● **Watershed Coalitions**

1. **FLLOWPA** – Overseeing the implementation of the annual work plan for FY2023-2024. Budget meetings with Marj.
1. **Upper Hudson River Watershed Coalition** – I canceled the July and August meetings due to hectic field seasons and a family emergency. Assisting with a new website supported by a grant Nick Rowell of Warren County SWCD wrote and received from the Alfred Z. Solomon Trust. Staff are implementing the Water Quality Improvement Project grant for the Upper Hudson River Roadside Erosion Remediation Phase II, and Marj and I work together on the financial reporting.
2. **St. Lawrence River Watershed Project** – I was elected president. Prepared for and held the July 9 meeting that was very well attended. Discussed best management practice implementation projects. I am leading a subcommittee with Kristin Ballou, Franklin County SWCD, and Nichelle Swisher, Lewis County SWCD, and will write a North Atlantic Aquatic Connectivity Collaborative assessment funding proposal for Ecosystem Based Management.
3. **Mohawk River Watershed Coalition** – Stewart prepared for and held the July 15 meeting. Invited John Salka, Director of Community Relations, Congressman Brandon Williams (NY-22) to provide an overview of the Water Resources Development Act legislative package. The WRDA is legislation that authorizes the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers Civil Works Program for projects to improve the nation's ports and harbors, inland waterway navigation, flood and storm protection, and other aspects of our water resources infrastructure. It passed in the House of Representatives on July 22, 2024, and if approved by the Senate, could provide New York State SWCDs with funding to implement stormwater, wastewater, and flood mitigation projects in the watershed. \$100 million is proposed for 2024. Representatives from Congresswoman Elise Stefanik's office also attended and reported on the WRDA.
4. **Black River Watershed** – Provided information to Nichelle Swisher for the BRWC.

- **Conservation Education**

- Adirondack Waterfest - The event was a tremendous success, and I thank Katie for her long hours coordinating the event with exhibitors, wildlife demonstrations, and the event venue. Jacob was invaluable, helping with set up, take down, packing, and Trivia on the Kunjamuck. Marj and Betsy Bain ran the Gyotaku fish printing station. I braved the hot weather in the Ronny Raindrop costume and visited kids, adults, every exhibitor, and went paddling on a stand-up paddleboard. I received positive feedback from locals who attended and were thankful for a fun event. Over 425 people attended!
- Presentations
  - Water quality, septic systems, HABs, SWCD services – Blue Mountain Lake Association Water Watch – 35 attendees
  - Town board meetings to present the 2023 Annual Report and summer programs: Towns of Hope, Long Lake, and Arietta meetings – 55 attendees
  - Hamilton County Board of Supervisors – summer update – 18 attendees
- New York State Envirothon volunteer – oral presentation evening judge and photographer.
- Assisting Katie with Conservation Field Day.

- **Septic System Replacement Fund**

- Answered inquiries – 6.

- Brainstormed ways to disseminate Round 4 information to landowners.
- **New York State Conservation District Employees Association**
  - NCF-Envirothon volunteer recruitment
  - Giant hogweed management with EPF funds through MOU with DEC Forest Health program
  - Conservation Skills Workshop – submitted course descriptions for the Community of Conservation and Drone workshops, assisted Katie with coordinating the hotel
  - Discussions and scheduled a meeting for a Rural Roads Active Management Program survey app
  - Prepared for and held the July 9 CDEA meeting
  - Provided costume information to the Ronnie Raindrop committee
  - Provide materials to the By-Laws subcommittee to prepare for upcoming meeting
  - Discussed contact database with SWCC’s Tyler Knapp
  - Lobbyist discussions
  - NYACD – submitted Director Orientation: Your Road Map to Understanding the Intersection of Partners and Programs to Executive Director Blanche Hurlbutt for the NYACD Annual Meeting
  - 4-Hour Fund – replied to inquiries, reviewed and approved applications
  - Attended June 16 SWCC meeting and provided report

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

**General**

7/10/23 Storm event

Shaw Brook Restoration Plans

WQIP Grant

Permits for 2024 construction season

Elbow Creek Corridor assessment

Hydroseeding

Straw

Vehicle and equipment maintenance

Erosion site inspections

Trail Maintenance

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

- Adirondack Waterfest – Friday August 2<sup>nd</sup> @ the Speculator Pavilion
  - Thank you to Betsy & all district staff for a fantastic event!
  - We had over 425 visitors come through Waterfest
  - We partnered with Donuts & More, The Inn at Speculator, and Oak Mountain for food specials
- 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
  - No new applications this month
- Conservation Field Day
  - Thursday September 19<sup>th</sup>
  - Finalizing presenters
- Lake Monitoring
  - Successful completion of July rotation despite tornados! Ready for August
  - Jacob & I were audited on our sampling methods by DEC on 7/18, the DEC person applauded our efforts and was happy with our program. She will send the final audit report TBD

### **Other**

- Attended Maintain the Chains' 2<sup>nd</sup> Annual Eco Arts Festival with our Stream Table ~250 attendees
- Assisted with Galerucella beetle care and release with Jacob for purple loosestrife control
- Assisting the Conservation Skills Workshop planning team with various tasks
- Assisting Warren Co with Knotweed
- Volunteered at NCF Envirothon for 2 days
- Attended ARCPro Training in Warren County
- Many septic system replacement fund calls
- Many Japanese knotweed calls
- Educated Wells Youth Rec on Macroinvertebrates and water quality with Jacob (40 attendees 7/10)
- Educated Hamilton County Trailblazers youth on nature journaling and invasive species with Jacob at Watch Hill and Auger Falls on 7/11 and 7/12
- Attended SLRWP meeting
- Inlet landowner erosion site visit
- Attended Elbow Creek stream assessment/planning meeting
- Attended APIPP Roadside Invasives training
- Attended Town of Hope meeting with Caitlin

### **Seasonal Technician's report Submitted by Jacob Vander Pyl**

- Adirondack Waterfest
  - Assisted in preparation for and in the collection of supply needed for Waterfest
  - Worked the welcome table during Waterfest
  - Assisted in the set up and take down of Waterfest
- APIPP Best Management Practices for Roadside Invasive Species training with Katie
- ArcGIS pro Warren County Training with Lenny and Katie
- Attended Elbow Creek stream assessment/planning meeting
- Assist Caitlin in research for WQIP Grant
- Boy Scouts of America Youth Protection Training

- Care for and release *Galerucella* beetle as a form of biocontrol for purple loosestrife
- Collect and deliver straw with Lenny
- Educated Wells Youth Recreation on macroinvertebrates and water quality with Katie
- Inlet erosion site visit
- Lake Monitoring
  - Assist Katie in the collection of data and sample
  - Deliver samples to AWI
- Trailblazers recreation hike and lesson on invasive species and nature journaling with Katie
- Volunteered at NCF Envirothon for 2 days with Caitlin and Katie
- Work on Ecotrail

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

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

**NYS SWCC News**

**NYS SWCC Seeking Candidates for the At Large Urban, Suburban, Rural non-farm interest Voting Member**

**Position:** The New York State Soil and Water Conservation Committee, made up of five voting members and nine advisory members, works to advance comprehensive natural resources management in partnership with and through the support of local Soil and Water Conservation Districts. The Soil and Water Conservation Committee, established within the Department of Agriculture and Markets, creates policy, fosters partnerships, and supports diverse Conservation District programming that help landowners and communities within the agricultural and non-agricultural sectors to address environmental challenges and protect New York’s natural resources. The NYS SWCC is seeking interested candidates to serve as the at large representative for urban, suburban, rural non-farm landowner interests. This is an excellent opportunity to support the work of Soil and Water Conservation Districts on a statewide level. If you are interested in learning more about the NYS SWCC and voting member responsibilities please contact Bethany Bzduch, Executive Director: [Bethany.bzduch@agriculture.ny.gov](mailto:Bethany.bzduch@agriculture.ny.gov)

**Upcoming NYS SWCC Meeting:** There will not be a SWCC meeting during the month of August. The next meeting of the NYS Soil and Water Conservation Committee will be on **Tuesday, September 17<sup>th</sup> starting at 10:00 AM**. Further details and an agenda for this meeting will be sent out in advance of the meeting. Reminder – participation at a SWCC meeting is eligible toward PM1, Part C of State Aid to Districts.

**(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 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](mailto:Jason.Kokkinos@agriculture.ny.gov) by **September 5<sup>th</sup>, 2024**. Applications for funding must be submitted through the NYS SWCC SharePoint website by **5PM, October 28<sup>th</sup>, 2024**.

**2025 Annual Plan of Work (APOW):** It’s time to start updating your APOW for 2025. The deadline for submittal to



your AEA is **November 1, 2024**. This will allow time to review, provide feedback, and recommend to the SWCC for approval by the end of the calendar year. Please don't hesitate to discuss with your Regional AEA if there are any questions or concerns.

### **Other Events**

**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 **August 15<sup>th</sup> event in Peru – Champlain Valley, and the August 19<sup>th</sup> event at the Long Island Hort. Research & Ext. Center**. Visit, <https://www.newyorksoilhealth.org/fielddays/> for more information and to register.

**2024 Conservation Skills Workshop** – The 2024 Conservation Skills Workshop will be held **September 23<sup>rd</sup> – September 26<sup>th</sup>** in Auburn, NY at the Holiday Inn (75 North St, Auburn, NY). This workshop is sponsored by the NYS CDEA, USDA NRCS, and NYS SWCC. This year there will be several classes that cover multiple days. This year's registration rate is \$50 per person. To register online, please visit: <https://docs.google.com/forms/d/e/1FAIpQLSfFG3u1TRRBRy-UuVB-prar5CJMPI78GPTb1VRfq-In6h-46A/viewform> before the registration deadline of **September 2<sup>nd</sup>, 2024**.

**2024 SWCD Administrative Forum:** The Administrative Conference Committee is diligently working on a great line-up of classes for the 2024 event in Saratoga Springs, NY. Please save the dates of **November 18<sup>th</sup> – 19<sup>th</sup>, 2024**. More details to follow.

### **Funding Opportunities**

**Great Lakes Restoration Initiative - Forest Restoration:** The U.S. Forest Service is anticipating \$5.2 million in new funds to be available for reforestation, ecosystem restoration and forest health improvement in the Great Lakes Basin. This funding will be competitively awarded based on applications received by the deadline **September 18, 2024**. All applications must be prepared and submitted through [www.Grants.gov](http://www.Grants.gov). More details available at, <https://www.fs.usda.gov/detail/r9/workingtogether/grants/?cid=FSEPRD898819>

**Great Lakes Restoration Initiative Cooperative - Weed Management:** The U.S. Forest Service anticipates that \$1M in new funds are expected to be available for the Fiscal Year 2024 GLRI Cooperative Weed Management Areas grant program. The goal of this program is to detect, prevent, eradicate, and/or control invasive plant species to promote resiliency, watershed stability, and biological diversity on Federal, State, or other public or private land. For this work, the minimum Federal request is \$25,000 and maximum Federal request is \$100,000. This funding will be competitively awarded based on applications received through [www.Grants.gov](http://www.Grants.gov) by the application deadline of **September 18, 2024**. More details available at, <https://www.fs.usda.gov/detail/r9/workingtogether/grants/?cid=FSEPRD898821>