



# 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

### October 8, 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

Beth Hunt, Town Supervisor - Zoom

Betsy Bain, Town Supervisor

#### District Staff

Caitlin Stewart, District Manager

Katie WhitKovits, District Technician

Marjorie Remias, Secretary to the Board

#### Absent

John M. Stortecky, Vice Chairperson

Shawn Hansen, Member-at-Large

Leonard Croote, District Technician

Ryan Cunningham, Associate

Environmental Analyst, Soil and Water

Conservation Committee

District Conservationist

Vacant, 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 September 3, 2024, meeting minutes** – The minutes were provided in advance of the meeting.

- **A motion was made by Bain, seconded by Buyce to approve the September 3, 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.

<b>Balance</b>	<b>8/31/24</b>	<b>484,367.00</b>
<b>Receipts</b>		<b>5,652.46</b>
<b>Disbursements</b>		<b>126,412.39</b>
<b>Balance</b>	<b>9/1/30</b>	<b>363,607.07</b>

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

## V. Executive Session to discuss Cornell Cooperative Extension

- A motion was made by Bain, seconded by Buyce to enter Executive Session at 9:36 a.m. to discuss Cornell Cooperative Extension. All voted in favor, motion carried.
- A motion was made by Bain, seconded by Bain to exit Executive Session at 9:58a.m. All voted in favor, motion carried.

The Board of Directors reported no action taken at this time.

VI. **Caring Through Conservation Mini Grant application review approval** – WhitKovits reported that we received four more applications for our mini-grant program which she reviewed in order of receipt with the Board. The District and Board were impressed with the applications and interest shown in the program. They decided that as 5 projects at \$2,000 each was allotted and not all the projects requested \$2,000, it would be feasible to fund all the eligible projects and stay almost within budget. There will be an average of \$229.55. The last project, from the Town of Wells Community Garden, will be on next month's agenda as a quorum cannot be met due to Director Hunt's abstaining because the project is from her town. Stewart noted that projects must be closed out before the end of the year.

- A motion was made by Buyce, seconded by Bain to accept the following Caring Through Conservation Mini Grant applications: The Town of Hope Hiking Trail Bridge in the amount of \$1,312.38, the Town of Indian Lake Monarch & Milkweed Challenge/1<sup>st</sup> Annual Monarch Festival in the amount of \$1,627.56 and Lake Pleasant Sacandaga Association Triangle Garden Pollinator Enhancement in the amount of \$1,000. Town of Wells Community Garden application was tabled. All voted in favor, motion carried.

## VII. District Activities part 1

- a. **Sediment and Erosion Control Program** - Croote reported that the stream portion and the abutments of Rob's Creek bridge replacement project on Old Route 30 in Wells is complete, and all that remains is the superstructure installation by Hamilton County DPW. Our trash pump and turbidity curtain were utilized for this project. Shaw Brook, Town of Long Lake update: landowner agreement forms were signed, NRCS planned to visit the site to conduct the cultural resources assessment, but canceled and will reschedule for Spring 2025. Croote is working with the County Engineer for the Shaw Brook Bridge Replacement project by providing the stream specifications and grade control, and for the Morehouse Emergency Tower Access Road Project, Croote is waiting on APA, DEC, Army Corps permit authorizations. Roadside hydroseeding will be wrapped up in the next few weeks. The new Finn T90 hydroseeder is fantastic.
- b. **Agricultural Environmental Management** – Nothing new to report.

- c. **Invasive Species Program** - WhitKovits reported that the team treated Japanese knotweed at high priority sites, including approved private landowners and Lyme Timber property. Nick Stoddard, Lyme Timber Forester, reported Japanese knotweed, barberry, and purple loosestrife infestation to Croote, who treated these early detection rapid response areas. WhitKovits said she and Croote did a presentation on our Japanese Knotweed Treatment program at the Division V meeting. She said they were able to demonstrate injecting the knotweed and show other districts how we run our program.
- d. **Conservation Field Day review** – WhitKovits thanked Buyce for being our photographer and Chairman Brian Wells for coming and speaking. We also had a representative from Senator Walczyk’s office and an appearance by Ronnie Raindrop. It was a great event, and the teachers were happy with how the day went.
- e. **Lake Monitoring Program** – WhitKovits reviewed the New York State Department of Environmental Conservation’s Lake Monitoring Program audit. WhitKovits and Stewart began the October rotation on Monday, and Croote will assist on Tuesday. The September rotation was successful, and staff delivered samples to the Adirondack Watershed Institute.

WhitKovits left the meeting at 10:26 a.m.

#### **VIII. Executive Session to discuss 2025 staff salaries (motion)**

- **A motion was made by Bain, seconded by Buyce to enter Executive Session at 10:27 a.m. to discuss 2025 staff salaries. All voted in favor, motion carried.**
- **A motion was made by Hunt, seconded by Bain to exit Executive Session at 11:09a.m. All voted in favor, motion carried.**

The Board of Directors reported their findings that are summarized in the following motion.

- **A motion was made by Buyce, seconded by Bain to accept the 2025 staff salaries as follows: Caitlin Stewart, \$92,859.20; Lenny Croote, \$80,967.60; Katie WhitKovits, \$66,412.50, and Marj Remias, \$42,644.07. All voted in favor, motion carried.**

**IX. 2025 Annual Plan of Work review and approval** – Stewart provided the plan for Director review in advance of the meeting. SWCC AEA Ryan Cunningham reviewed the document, commenting that “I see how you modified that layout, great idea. I also always like how you utilize the plan throughout the year and have the ability to check-in quarterly on progress; I’ve shared that strategy with newer managers. No major comments, consider your plan submitted and approved on our end.”

- **A motion was made by Bain, seconded by Hunt to accept the Hamilton County Soil and Water Conservation District’s 2025 Annual Plan of Work and permit Chairperson Victoria Buyce to sign the document and District Manager Caitlin Stewart to submit it to the Soil and Water Conservation Committee. All in favor, motion carried.**
  - X. 2025 Part B Project review and approval** - Stewart provided the plan for Director review in advance of the meeting.
- **A motion was made by Bain, seconded by Hunt to approve the 2025 Conservation Project Financial Assistance Request in the amount of \$6,000 to implement the Recreation Center Stormwater Management Project in the Town of Morehouse and permit District Manager Caitlin Stewart to submit the document to the Soil and Water Conservation Committee. All in favor, motion carried.**
- XI. NYCLASS municipal cooperation resolution** – Remias reported that she researched the investment fund the county treasurer’s office uses. It is NY MuniTrust, and the treasurer uses a broker to manage their investments. Remias said she would prefer to go with NYCLASS because we are a smaller entity and because other conservation districts use it and would be able to help with issues that are specific to districts. Additionally, there is no minimum investment amount. Director Hunt stated that she has worked with NYCLASS and they are easy to work with and have a great online platform.
- **A motion was made by Buyce, seconded by Hunt to approve the District registering to invest in NYCLASS. All voted in favor, motion carried.**
  - XII. Canon imageRUNNER ADVANCE C3926i copier purchase** – Stewart reported that the District’s current copy machine, a Canon 2225, was purchased in February 2013 and needs to be replaced due to complications with obtaining parts that are no longer manufactured, a decline in copy quality, and frequent paper jams. The proposed model is a direct replacement to our current machine, and includes the base price of the machine, cabinet, and toner. We would like to add the finisher and hole punch unit for a total of \$4,084.00. We would like to purchase the machine from Derby Office Equipment, Inc., (based in Gloversville), who has provided excellent, professional, and prompt customer service and maintenance over the life of our current copy machine. Following the District’s procurement policy, 3 quotes were obtained and included in Director’s packets. The CopyFaxes and Matter o Fax quotes are only for the copy machine and exclude delivery, installation, and the finisher / hole punch unit.
- **A motion was made by Hunt, seconded by Buyce to approve the purchase of a Canon imageRUNNER ADVANCE C3926i copier with the finisher and hole punch unit from Derby Office Equipment, Inc., in the amount of \$4,084.00. All in favor, motion carried.**

**XIII. 2024 Administrative Conference registration** – Stewart reported that she and WhitKovits would like to attend, and the total expense is \$200 for 2 staff members, including lodging and meals. Stewart is instructing the Managers’ Forum. Funding is in the 2024 budget for staff training.

- **A motion was made by Bain seconded by Hunt to approve the 2024 Administrative Conference registration fee in the amount of \$200.00 for District Manager Caitlin Stewart and Technician Katie WhitKovits to attend. All in favor, motion carried.**

**XIV. Accept the Auctions International bid for the hydroseeder** – Stewart reported that Croote provided her with the following update: The trade in value of the old Finn hydroseeder came in at \$14,500, and Auction’s International came in at \$19,800.

- **A motion was made by Bain, seconded by Buyce to accept the Auction’s International price of the Finn Hydroseeder of \$19,800 and permit District Technician Lenny Croote with proceeding with the paperwork. All in favor, motion carried.**

**XV. District Activities part 2**

- a. **Conservation Education Program-** Conservation Field Day video highlighting students, presenters and activities to be shown at the end of meeting.
- b. **Water Testing Program** - Remias oversaw the September drop off and reported that 16 samples were delivered.
- c. **Septic System Replacement Fund** - Stewart reported that she and WhitKovits continue to respond to email and phone call inquiries. They meet with DEC on October 18 to discuss Round 4 program logistics.
- d. **Watershed partnership update**
  1. **FLLOWPA** – Stewart reported that she and Remias are overseeing the closeout for FY2022-2023, which is due in December. WhitKovits attended the September Eastern Region meeting. Stewart will attend the upcoming full board meeting on October 15.
  2. **Upper Hudson River Watershed Coalition** – As President, Stewart oversaw the September 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. Remias oversees the financial report for Phase II Roadside Erosion Remediation Program grant.

3. **St. Lawrence River Watershed Project** – As President, Stewart oversaw the September 10 meeting. She finalized and submitted a press release about the Watershed Revitalization Plan that was published in the *Adirondack Almanack*.
4. **Mohawk River Watershed Coalition** – As President, Stewart held the September meeting. She wrote a letter of education for the Water Resources Development Act that was approved by the coalition members, NYACD and SWCC. Stewart wrote the Mohawk River Watershed Coalition Capacity contract that was approved by the New York State Department of Environmental Conservation in the amount of \$1.5 million and is now working with the Fulton County SWCD team on contract timeline and priority projects for implementation.
5. **Black River Watershed** – Nichelle Swisher, Lewis County SWCD, is preparing materials to form the coalition. WhitKovits attended the September meeting.
- e. **Hamilton County Hazard Mitigation Plan** – Stewart attended a meeting with Don Purdy, Chris Rhodes, Tim O’Neil, and Karl Abrams to discuss the Hamilton County Hazard Mitigation Plan Grant Phase II. They asked that she oversee the grant, including running meetings and gathering information to update the plan. She agreed and is looking forward to assisting the county with this essential and worth while initiative.

**XVI. Other** – Stewart reported that Seasonal Technician Jacob Vander Pyl’s last day was September 30. He was a wonderful addition to the team, and was of great help to programs, projects, and events. She thanked him for his professional conduct, upbeat attitude, flexibility, and willingness to assist. He will be missed!

**XVII. Directors’ comments** - none

**XIV. Staff reports** – Stewart disseminated and emailed copies of the staff reports.

**XV. Partner reports**

1. **District Conservationist’s report** – No report, position vacant.

2. **New York State Soil and Water Conservation Committee report** – appended to minutes.

**XVI. Correspondence-** We received the NYS Soil and Water Conservation Committee’s 2023 Annual Report. There was a photo of technician WhitKovits and mention of Hamilton county’s water monitoring program in the report. A letter from Congresswomen Elise Stefanik’s office with congratulations on our Conservation Field Day and regrets for not being able to attend and a letter announcing Tammara Van Ryn’s retirement from AIPP were also received.

**XVII. Next meeting date** – Wednesday, November 6, 2024, 9:30 a.m., Hamilton County SWCD office, Inlet Highway Department, and Zoom

**XVIII. Adjournment** – A motion was made by Bain seconded by Hunt to adjourn the meeting at 11:52 a.m. All in favor, carried.

Respectfully Submitted



Marjorie Remias  
Secretary to the Board/Treasurer

DRAFT

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

- **Administration**
  - Coordinated work for Jacob's last day
  - Civil Service – Met with Officer Carole Ruiz to discuss the upcoming December exams for Technician and Senior Technician
  - Updated the 2025 APOW
  - Completed the 2025 Part B request with Lenny
  - Submitted award applications to NYACD
  - Completed Q3 APOW
  - New logo
  - Staff meetings
  - 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
- **Technical Assistance**
  - Provided an *Adirondack Explorer* reporter with flood mitigation information
  - Purple loosestrife biocontrol
  - Water Testing Program results interpretation
- **Hamilton County Hazard Mitigation Plan**
  - Meeting to coordinate grant requirements and plan updates
  - We will be overseeing the grant on behalf of Hamilton County, and are thrilled to be involved!
- **Lake Monitoring Program**
  - Assisting Katie with the September and October rotations
- **Conservation Education**
  - Conservation Field Day – assisted with the event, wrote and submitted the press release, made a video
- **Septic System Replacement Fund**
  - Responded to 10 landowner inquiries
  - Spoke with DEC regarding Round 4 and will follow up with a meeting later in October
- **Invasive Species**
  - Attended the Warren County SWCD's Eastern Hemlocks, Forest Health, and Threats to the Future workshop focusing on managing forests for adaptation and resiliency with exploration of known threats affecting forest ecosystems.



- Attended and took minutes for the joint Invasive Species Advisory Committee and Invasive Species Council meeting
- Promoted the APIPP Summit in October
- Watershed Coalitions - ongoing work with the Finger - Lakes Lake Ontario Watershed Protection Alliance, the Upper Hudson River Watershed Coalition, the St. Lawrence River Watershed Project, the Mohawk River Watershed Coalition, and the Black River Watershed. See minutes for full details.
- New York State Conservation District Employees Association
  - Held the September 11 - 12 meeting at Great Camp Sagamore
  - Hosted a Rural Roads Active Management Program application meeting with Franklin and Warren County SWCDs, and the SWCC
  - CDEA By-Laws subcommittee meeting
  - Attended the Division V meeting and provided a CDEA update
  - Attended the September SWCC meeting
  - I emailed Mr. Cavazos, Municipal Assistance Unit regarding civil service challenges twice. Focus areas included updating the pool of testing question or transitioning to training and experience tests, and addressing the long length of time it takes for exams to be held after they are ordered.
  - Working on the October CDEA Newsletter is hot off the press, and back issues are available at <https://www.nyscdea.com/>
  - Coordinated a drone class for the Cons Skills Workshop
  - Coordinating and instructing a Director Orientation for the NYACD Annual Meeting
  - Charing the Education Track for the 2025 Water Quality Symposium, developed draft class schedule with committee and submitted it to the Vice President.

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

**General**

7/10/23 Storm event  
     Shaw Brook Restoration Plans and permits  
     Shaw Brook Bridge Grade Control Plans  
 Permits for 2024 construction season  
 Elbow Creek Corridor assessment  
 Robbs Creek Bridge Repair  
 Bear Creek Culvert replacement  
 Surveyed Uncas Road Culvert  
 Emergency tower stream crossing survey design, and permits  
 Hydroseeding  
 Vehicle and equipment maintenance  
 Erosion site inspections  
 Septic Inspection  
 Septic inspection presentation for Village of Speculator

Trail Maintenance  
Conservation Field Days  
Invasive Plant Management  
2025 Tree and Shrub Program  
Attended a Forest Pest workshop  
Ordered Silt Sock Filling machine  
Sold T75 Hydroseeder

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

- 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
  - **3 applications for review**
    - **Indian Lake**
    - **Hope**
    - **LPSA**
- 40<sup>th</sup> Annual Lynn Glausha Conservation Field Day
  - Thursday September 19<sup>th</sup>
  - We had 70 students from Long Lake, Indian Lake, Lake Pleasant, Wells, and Wheelerville attend
  - Topics: Wild Plants, Backcountry Leave No Trace, Water Quality in Our Watershed, Moose History Mystery, Equines in Forest Management, and Terrestrial Invasive Species
  - Brian Wells attended and gave a speech, James from Senator Walczyk's office, and Ronny Raindrop made appearances
  - Thank you to Vicki for being our photographer and the whole staff for a great event!
- Lake Monitoring
  - Successful September rotation!

Other

- Rural Roads Active Management Program meeting to build a new app usable state-wide
- Attended Eastern Region FLOWPA meeting in Lewis County
- Attended Black River Watershed Coalition planning meeting
- Presented at and attended Division 5 meeting in Speculator
- Held CFD
- Attended Arc Pro training in Warren Co

- Attended Conservation Skills Workshop: Basic Tree & Shrub ID, and Basic Soils
- Planned and booked hotel for 200+ Conservation Skills Workshop attendees
- Presented Macroinvertebrate Mayhem at Homeschool Day at the Blue Mtn Museum

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

- Assist in survey for emergency bridge in Morehouse
- Assist with Robb's Creek bridge replacement
- Survey for and design the dimensions needed for Polly Road Bridge
- Hydroseeding
  - ditches in Benson, Indian Lake and Lake Pleasant hydroseeded
- September Lake Monitoring
  - Assist in collecting data and sample
  - Delivering water sample and pick up empty sample bottle from AWI
- Attended Division V Meeting
- Conservation Field Day
  - Assist in the preparation for and the clean up of the event
- Attend Conservation Skills Workshop
  - Classes attended include basic soils, stream smart, and construction materials
- October Lake Monitoring
  - Prepare empty sample bottle and filter paper for use

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

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

**NYS SWCC News**

**CRF Round 8 Awards:** Congratulations to those Districts who will be receiving funds to help farms via the Climate Resilient Farming Program! Over \$33 million will be divided between a total of 70 projects, with implementation planned on 184 farms across New York State. Projects are supported through \$16.14 million in State funding, plus an additional \$17 million in federal funds. Information about Plan of Work development will be available soon. More info about the Round 8 awards here:

[https://agriculture.ny.gov/system/files/documents/2024/09/projectdescriptions\\_round8\\_climateresilinetfarming.pdf](https://agriculture.ny.gov/system/files/documents/2024/09/projectdescriptions_round8_climateresilinetfarming.pdf)

**(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). The RFP and associated documents are now available on Sharepoint, <https://nysemail.sharepoint.com/sites/Agriculture/SWCC>. Applications for funding must be submitted through the NYS SWCC SharePoint website by **5PM, October 28th, 2024**.

**October SWCC Meeting:** There will be no SWCC meeting during the month of October. The next meeting of the NYS Soil and Water Conservation Committee will be on Tuesday, **November 12<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.

#### **State Aid to Districts:**

- **2025 Part B Conservation Project Financial Assistance** – Part B proposals are due, November 1, 2024. Projects are to be completed by December 31, 2025. Part B requests should be submitted via email to [ben.luskin@agriculture.ny.gov](mailto:ben.luskin@agriculture.ny.gov).
- **2024 Part C Performance Measures** - As for Performance Measures, the end of the year is rapidly approaching and SWCDs should be checking to make sure that your District is fulfilling their obligations for meetings, training, training plans, etc., to be able to earn all the funds that will be available. Please contact your Regional AEA with any specific questions that you may have.
- **2025 Part C Performance Measures** – There will be no Performance Measures changes for 2025. SWCC will analyze the District's performance on the 2024 reports and consider changes for 2026 after holding a meeting for District input.

#### **Other Events**

**Great Lakes Action Agenda Sub-Basin Work Group Meetings - Save the Dates:** DEC Great Lakes program staff are excited to announce the next round of Great Lakes Action Agenda (GLAA) Sub-Basin Work Group meetings will be held this fall to provide opportunities to learn updates from NYSDEC Great Lakes Program and partners. <https://dec.ny.gov/nature/waterbodies/lakes-rivers/great-lakes/action-agenda>

- Lake Erie: Wednesday, **November 6th, 1 – 4 PM**
- Southwest (SW) Lake Ontario: Friday, **November 8th, 1 – 4 PM**
- Southeast (SE) Lake Ontario: Thursday, **November 14th, 2024; 1 - 4:00 PM**
- Northeast Lake Ontario-St. Lawrence River (LOSLR): **Friday, November 15th, 1 – 4 PM**

**2024 SWCD Administrative Forum:** The 2024 Administrative Conference Committee will convene in Saratoga Springs, NY on **November 18th – 19th, 2024**. Please complete the google form to register <https://forms.gle/z58YckQbgHUVngg39>. Deadline for signups is **October 17<sup>th</sup>**.

**2024 Northeast Region Agribusiness & CCA Conference:** Including the Basic Training track for those preparing to take the CCA exams as well as the Advanced Training track for current CCAs. An in-person track will commence at the Doubletree Hotel, East Syracuse, NY on **November 19<sup>th</sup>-20<sup>th</sup>, 2024**, followed by a virtual track will commence on **December 10<sup>th</sup>-11<sup>th</sup>, 2024**, when additional programming will be offered.

More information and a registration link can be found here, <https://www.nysaba.com/about-3>

**NACD 2025 Annual Meeting:** Registration for The National Association of Conservation Districts' (NACD) 79<sup>th</sup> Annual Meeting is now open! The 2025 Annual Meeting will take place in Salt Lake City, Utah, from **February 8<sup>th</sup> – 12<sup>th</sup>, 2025**. To learn more and to register, please visit: <https://www.nacdnet.org/news-and-events/annual-meeting/>

### **Other Funding**

**NOAA Funding Available for Great Lakes Habitat Restoration:** NOAA announced the availability of up to \$12 million in GLRI funds to support work restoring habitat for Great Lakes native fisheries. NOAA is seeking proposals for projects that restore Great Lakes habitats and lead to significant and sustainable benefits for Great Lakes native fish species. Applications will be accepted and considered on an annual basis. To be considered for funding in the 2025 federal fiscal year, applications are due by **October 28, 2024**. For more information, <https://www.fisheries.noaa.gov/grant/noaa-great-lakes-fish-habitatrestoration-partnership-grants>.