



Hamilton County Soil and Water Conservation District

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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 December 11, 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 - Zoom

Betsy Bain, Town Supervisor

District Staff

Caitlin Stewart, District Manager

Leonard Croote, District Technician

Katie Whitkovits, District Technician

Marjorie Remias, Secretary to the Board

Absent

Shawn Hansen, Member-at-Large

Ryan Cunningham, Associate Environmental Analyst, Soil and Water Conservation Committee

Katherine Girard, District Conservationist, Natural Resources and Conservation Service

Blanche Hurlbutt, Executive Director, New York Association of Conservation Districts

Guest

Real Boudreau, Benchmark Equipment & Supplies - Zoom

- 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 November 6, 2024, 2024, meeting minutes** – The minutes were provided in advance of the meeting.
 - **A motion was made by Bain, seconded by Buyce to approve the November 6, 2024, meeting minutes. All in favor, motion carried.**
- IV. Treasurer's Report** – Remias distributed the Treasurer's Report and November expenses for Board review and approval for payment, including two late arriving invoices for Wafler Nursery for \$163.25 and Meadowview for \$250.00. She also requested approval for transfers of \$108,000.00 from General Savings to General Checking, and \$45,000.00 from WRB Savings to WRB Checking.

Balance	10/31/24	\$323,913.29
Receipts		51,166.72
Disbursements		85,965.97
Balance	11/30/24	\$289,114.04

- **A motion was made by Bain, seconded by J.M. Stortecky to accept the Treasurer’s report, approve the bills to be paid, and the transfers of \$108,000.00 from General Savings to General Checking and \$45,000.00 from WRB Savings to WRB Checking. All in favor, motion carried.**

Discussion with Guest Real Boudreau via Zoom regarding their GNNS Global Navigation System that Technicians Croote and WhitKovits have been researching. Board conclusions in section VII (following).

- V. **Disposition of Fiscal Year 2016 Records** – Stewart requested a motion for disposition of eligible records for fiscal year 2016.
 - **A motion was made by Buyce, seconded by J.M. Stortecky to approve the Disposition of Eligible Records for Fiscal Year 2016. All in favor, motion carried.**
- VI. **Resolutions recommending the reappointments of Betsy Bain and Beth Hunt to the Board of Directors of the Hamilton County Soil and Water Conservation District**

RESOLUTION #6-2024

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

DATED: DECEMBER 11, 2024

BY: Mr. J.M. Stortecky

WHEREAS, the term of office of Beth Hunt, Director of the Hamilton County Soil and Water Conservation District, terminates on December 31, 2024, now, therefore, 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:

Beth Hunt to succeed herself as a Supervisor Representative for a term of one year, commencing January 1, 2025, and terminating December 31, 2025.

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

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

NAYES: None

ABSENT: Mr. Hansen

ABSTAIN: Ms. Hunt

RESOLUTION #7-2024

RESOLUTION RECOMMENDING THE RE-APPOINTMENT OF BETSY BAIN TO THE BOARD OF DIRECTORS OF THE HAMILTON COUNTY SOIL AND WATER CONSERVATION DISTRICT

DATED: DECEMBER 11, 2024

BY: Mr. J.M. Stortecky

WHEREAS, the term of office of Betsy Bain, Director of the Hamilton County Soil and Water Conservation District, terminates on December 31, 2024, now, therefore, 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:

Betsy Bain to succeed herself as a Supervisor Representative for a term of one year, commencing January 1, 2025, and terminating December 31, 2025.

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

AYES: Ms. Buyce, Mr. Stortecky, Ms. Hunt

NAYES: None

ABSENT: Mr. Hansen

ABSTAIN: Ms. Bain

- VII. Purchase GPS System** – Croote would like to upgrade the District’s surveying capabilities for work on culverts, bridges, stream restorations and various other projects. He provided 3 quotes in advance of the meeting. Croote and WhitKovits did extensive research and recommended the Hemisphere S631 Base and Rover from Benchmark Equipment & Supplies. Croote invited Real Boudreau, a representative from Benchmark, to present the system and answer any questions the Board had. The

Board made several inquiries and agreed that this system best meets our needs.

- **A motion was made by Buyce, seconded by Bain to approve the purchase of the Hemisphere GPS system and accessories in the amount of \$26,000.00. All in favor, motion carried.**

VIII. Approval of the 2025 Board of Directors meeting schedule – Stewart provided the proposed schedule in advance of the meeting. The schedule is appended to minutes.

- **A motion was made by J.M. Stortecky, seconded by Buyce to approve the 2025 Board of Directors meeting schedule. All in favor, motion carried.**

IX. 2024 Part B Project funds – Stewart reported that Croote oversaw the installation of the Bear Creek Culvert Replacement Project in the Town of Hope. This project was supported through Part B in the amount of \$6,000. Croote asked the board to approve an additional \$2,000.00 from Part C to contribute to remaining expenses for this project.

- **A motion was made by Hunt, seconded by J.M. Stortecky to approve \$2,000.00 of Part C funds to support the Bear Creek Culvert Replacement Project in the Town of Hope. All in favor, motion carried.**

X. Breach Notification Policy- Stewart presented an Information and Security Breach Notification Policy to the Board for review. The policy is appended to the minutes.

- **A motion was made by Buyce, seconded by Bain to approve the Information and Security Breach Notification Policy. All in favor, motion carried.**

XI. Cell phone policy update – Stewart reviewed the proposed update to our cell phone policy. The updated policy is as follows:

Cell Phone Policy

\$30 per month reimbursement to be paid by voucher quarterly to all full-time employees, as they use their phones for District business.

\$15 per month reimbursement to be paid by voucher quarterly to any seasonal technicians hired, as they use their phones for District business.

If it becomes necessary in the future the policy can be revisited.

- **A motion was made by Bain, seconded by Hunt to approve the cell phone policy update. All in favor, motion carried.**

XII. District activities

a. Administrative Conference Review – Stewart reported that she, Remias, and WhitKovits attended the conference on November 18 and 19. Stewart oversaw the Managers’ Meeting where focus areas included Natural Resources Conservation Service, New York Association of Conservation Districts, and Soil and Water Conservation Committee relationships, CDEA hiring a lobbyist and attorney, challenges with Tier 6 retirement, and the need for more frequent Managers’ Meetings. Stewart also attended a Prevailing Wage presentation given by the Department of Labor. Districts may be subject to Prevailing Wage, triggered by Bond Act funds in Soil and Water Conservation Committee programs.

b. Managers’ Meeting Review – Stewart attended the state-wide Managers’ Meeting hosted by the SWCC on December 3 and 4. Lively discussions included SWCC strategic priorities and how Districts fit in, Prevailing Wage and impacts on SWCC programs, breakout sessions with facilitated discussions on operations, equipment, engineering. It was beneficial to hear from 7 different District staff members from all over the state during the panel discussion, where discussion topics included recruitment and retention, internship programs, district growth strategies, capacity building, budgeting and policies. Stewart will investigate Handshake for vacancy advertising. SWCC may be able to provide program audits of high-risk areas. Stewart remarked how invaluable these networking meetings are.

c. Sediment and Erosion Control Program – WhitKovits and Croote attended a Reconnecting Waterways training in Vermont, with a focus on benefits of dam removal and remediation. Both found the training very informative and worthwhile.

d. Caring Through Conservation Mini-Grant Program – WhitKovits reported that mini-grant applications were up this year. We received 9 requests and approved 7. Six projects were funded as one project was unable to be completed by year end. The total budget used was \$8,899. The Board discussed increasing the funding available and not limiting the number of projects to be funded as some come in at less than \$2,000, leaving a surplus in the budget.

- **A motion was made by Buyce, seconded by Bain to increase the mini-grant fund for 2025 to \$12,000 with a limit of \$2,000 per project and no limit on the number of projects to be funded. All in favor, motion carried.**

e. Agricultural Environmental Management - WhitKovits reported that she hopes to work with Franklin County in 2025 and will schedule a site visit here in Hamilton County to review forestry at a local property. J.M. Stortecky mentioned Century Gap Farm is interested in NRCS’s conservation services for 2025.

f. Invasive Species Program – Stewart attended the Adirondack Park Invasive Plant Program’s Year End Partner Meeting on December 5. She contacted Thom Allgaier, Invasive Species Coordinator, Department of Agriculture and Markets, who will provide the district with spotted lanternfly traps as lower elevations and warmer microclimates

like those found in our area may sustain SLF. APIPP reported on their eDNA research, and Stewart would like to incorporate eDNA into the District's aquatic invasive species monitoring program.

g. Conservation Education Program – WhitKovits reported that she presented the Great Migration Challenge to Northville Central School's 7th graders. She also thanked Board Chairperson Vicki Buyce for judging the Conservation Field Day posters and essay submissions for the contest.

h. Lake Monitoring Program - WhitKovits reported that she is waiting for Adirondack Watershed Institute to send results.

i. Septic System Replacement Fund – Stewart reported that a request for reimbursement for Round 3 was received, reviewed by Croote, completed by Stewart and submitted to the Hamilton County Treasurer for payment. The entire team reviewed the Round 4 notification letter, application, and award and denial letters. We are seeking District board and Hamilton County Board of Supervisors' approval to update the grant application to reflect the addition of an income question.

- **A motion was made by Bain, seconded by J.M. Stortecky to approve the Round 4 Septic System Replacement Fund grant application with additional income question. All in favor, motion carried.**

j. Hamilton County Hazard Mitigation Plan Update – Stewart reported that she has not received any updates on the Hazard Mitigation Grant Program Planning Sub application for the Hamilton County Hazard Mitigation Plan 26 Update.

k. Watershed partnership update

- **FLLOWPA** – Remias and Stewart are preparing the closeout for FY2022-2023, which is due in December.
- **Upper Hudson River Watershed Coalition** – As President, Stewart oversaw the November 7 meeting and has begun work on the annual report. She will be stepping down as president, and Amber Luke, Washington County SWCD, will serve. Stewart entered required information into the new SFS Grant System, assisting with oversight of 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.
- **St. Lawrence River Watershed Project** – As President, Stewart oversaw the December 10 meeting. She proposed an annual report, but few Districts attended the meeting to provide feedback.
- **Mohawk River Watershed Coalition** – As President, Stewart oversaw the November 13 meeting. Overseeing the Mohawk River Watershed Coalition Capacity contract with DEC in the amount of \$1,500,000.00. Attended a Great

Lakes Action Agenda Sub-basin Work Group meeting to maintain lines of communication and learn about new partner priorities. Attended a meeting with DEC and United States Geologic Service staff to discuss research projects including pre and post project survey studies to show the efficacy of flood resiliency projects as it pertains to the environment.

- **Black River Watershed** – WhitKovits attended the December meeting of the Black River Watershed Coalition of Conservation Districts and will serve as Secretary. Stewart provided feedback on the mission statement and request for information including bylaws to President Nichele Swisher.

l. Logo – Stewart provided another round of feedback to Aubrey Zegstroo.

m. Other

- Croote is working with Trout Unlimited to reconnect passage through the Moose River Watershed. Culverts will be right sized or replaced with bottomless passages (bridges). TU has some funds from the Great Lakes Restoration Initiative, and applied for more through DEC Water Quality Improvement Project. Part of TU's prioritization is measuring the length of stream that will be reconnected if the passage is replaced, showing project benefit. They are also conducting eDNA testing to verify fish species at some sites. TU is hoping to partner with Hamilton County DPW to install new passages, and Croote is acting as a liaison and will oversee project installation.
- AdkAction received a \$124,396 Smart Growth Grant from the New York State Department of Environmental Conservation (NYS DEC). Dylan Walrath, DEC Division of Lands & Forests, contacted the District and requested our involvement in the project to install pollinator habitat on a capped landfill. Croote attended the site visit, provided guidance, and took a soil sample.
- USDA Approves Emergency Forest Restoration Assistance – The Farm Service Agency requested Croote's assistance with promoting the Emergency Forest Restoration Program (EFRP) to address tornado damages. EFRP provides payments to eligible owners of nonindustrial private forest (NIPF) land to enable the owners to carry out emergency measures to restore land damaged by a natural disaster. EFRP signup began on December 2, 2024, and ends on January 30, 2025. Croote posted flyers around the county and contacted the towns of Lake Pleasant, Arietta, and Wells. Stewart assisted with press contacts, and disseminated the press release. There may be more work in the future to install erosion prevention best management practices.
- Stewart reported that the new printer is fantastic and thanked the board for supporting this purchase that increases the team's efficiency and decreases our stress level.

- Adirondack Tree and Shrub Sale – Croote selected and ordered the plants for the 2025 sale. He began work to update the order form and flyers.
- Manager Stewart shared this Walt Disney quote - “Whatever we accomplish belongs to our entire group, a tribute to our combined effort.” She wholeheartedly thanked the Board of Directors for their support and commitment and staff for their dedication and collaboration that produced the District’s many accomplishments in 2024.

n. **Directors’ comments** - None

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

XIV Partner reports

- a. **New York State Soil and Water Conservation Committee report** – appended to minutes.
- b. **District Conservationist’s report** – No report provided.
- c. **New York Association of Conservation Districts** – appended to the minutes.

XV. Correspondence

- a. Thank you from Karl Abrams for overseeing the Hamilton County Hazard Mitigation Plan grant

XVI Next meeting: January 7, 2025, 9:30 a.m., Hamilton County SWCD office, Inlet Highway Department, and Zoom

XVII Adjournment

- **A motion was made by Bain, seconded by Hunt to adjourn the meeting at 11:01 a.m. All in favor, carried.**

Respectfully Submitted



Marjorie Remias
Secretary to the Board/Treasurer

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

- **Administration**
 - Began work on the District's 2024 Annual Report
 - Began work on the District's annual presentation for the Hamilton County Board of Supervisors
 - Attended the CDEA Administrative Conference, oversaw the Managers' Forum, attended a prevailing wage presentation provided by the Department of Labor
 - 2025 Planning Meeting with the Mud and Stump team
 - Registered with NYCLASS
 - New logo – provided feedback
 - Staff meetings
 - Tracked performance measures that ensure our District receives state aid funding
 - Reviewed the 2024 budget with Marj
 - Board meeting preparation
 - Assisted Tim Ellifritz with computer maintenance and updates
 - Website updates
 - Social media posts

- **Technical Assistance**
 - Assisted Lenny with an email reply to a landowner regarding logging and erosion
 - Assisting Maintain the Chain with presenter ideas for their 2025 event
 - Adirondack Lakes Alliance – Water Quality Coordinating Committee strategy and 2023 meeting minutes
 - Provided newspaper editor contacts to Lenny to disseminate to the Farm Service Agency for their Emergency Forest Restoration Assistance
 - Website ADA compliance – Monroe County SWCD

- **Hamilton County Hazard Mitigation Plan**
 - Reviewed grant announcements

- **Septic System Replacement Fund**
 - Responded to 1 landowner inquiry
 - With the entire team, updated materials for Round 4

- **Invasive Species**
 - Adirondack Park Invasive Plant Program's Year End Partner Meeting on December 5.
 - Contacted Thom Allgaier, Invasive Species Coordinator, Department of Agriculture and Markets, who will provide the district with spotted lanternfly traps
 - Researched eDNA

- **Watershed Coalitions**

- **FLLOWPA** – Preparing the closeout for FY2022-2023, which is due in December.
- **Upper Hudson River Watershed Coalition** – Oversaw the November 7 meeting. Began work on the annual report. I will be stepping down as president, and Amber Luke, Washington County SWCD, will serve. Entered required information into the new SFS Grant System, assisting with oversight of 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.
- **St. Lawrence River Watershed Project** – Held the December 10 meeting. Proposed an annual report, but few Districts attended the meeting to provide feedback.
- **Mohawk River Watershed Coalition** – Oversaw the November 13 meeting. Overseeing the Mohawk River Watershed Coalition Capacity contract with DEC in the amount of \$1,500,000.00. Attended a Great Lakes Action Agenda Sub-basin Work Group meeting to maintain lines of communication and learn about new partner priorities. Attended a meeting with DEC and United States Geologic Service staff to discuss research projects including pre and post project survey studies to show the efficacy of flood resiliency projects as it pertains to the environment.
- **Black River Watershed** – Provided feedback on the mission statement and request information to the Black River Watershed Coalition of Conservation District’s President Nichele Swisher. WhitKovits will serve as Secretary.
- **New York State Conservation District Employees Association**
 - Oversaw the November CDEA meeting, including coordinating presentations on WQIP Fish and Wildlife Habitat Restoration and Enhancement (DEC) and New York Outcomes Fund (Alan Martinez, Cornell), and an update on the National Association of Conservation Districts Northeast Region (Nika Colley, Northeast Region Representative)
 - Oversaw the Managers’ Forum held at the Administrative Conference
 - Preliminary 2025 CDEA budget work
 - Updated Manager contact list
 - Reviewed Marren Stoddard’s MOA for Ronny Raindrop® costumes
 - Continued research and sought District feedback on hiring a lobbyist
 - Attended the SWCC’s Technical Advisory Committee meeting on December 21
 - CDEA By-Laws subcommittee meeting
 - Working with Ryan Cunningham and P.J. Emerick to hold the next Municipal Assistance Subcommittee to discuss DEC permitting
 - Attended a meeting with Jared Popoli (New York State Water Resources Institute) and Ryan Cunningham to discuss the North Atlantic Aquatic Connectivity

Collaborative to the Southeast Aquatic Regional Partnership and SARPS's contribution request

- Attended the November SWCC meeting
- Worked with SWCC to develop statewide survey
- Working on the December CDEA Newsletter is hot off the press, and back issues are available at <https://www.nyscdea.com/>
- Charing the Education Track for the 2025 Water Quality Symposium, submitted course descriptions and instructor registration forms to Vice President
- Reviewed and commented on the WQS Registration Packet
- Preparing for a 4-Way Partnership meeting on December 18
- Reviewed and approved 2 4-hour fund application close outs
- Contracting staff support letter
- Reviewed and replied to a letter detailing concerns and challenges from the New York State Sediment and Erosion Control Certification Program's Steering Committee
- Information requests: health insurance policies, questionnaire, NRCS cultural resources

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

General

7/10/23 Storm event
Shaw Brook Bridge Permits
Winterized equipment
Dry Hydrant surveys, designs and Installations
Vehicle and equipment maintenance
Winterized equipment
Erosion site inspections
Trail Maintenance
2025 Tree and Shrub Program
Researched new GPS/ GNSS Surveying equipment
Research Trash Pumps

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

- Caring Through Conservation Mini Grant
 - All final reports have been received and reviewed
 - Total funds paid: \$8,899.65 of the \$10,000 allocated
 - We were able to fund 6 mini grant projects this year
 - Town of Hope couldn't complete their project in time but will reapply for funding again in the Spring. If their project had been completed, we would have spent the entire \$10,000 budgeted

- 45th Annual Lynn Glausha Conservation Field Day
 - Vicki graded essays and posters with me!
 - I am scheduling award ceremonies with each of the 4 schools
- Lake Monitoring
 - All field and YSI data have been downloaded and I am working on organizing everything for reports and the 2024 Master Data spreadsheet
 - Picked up winterized boat
- Administrative Conference 11/18
 - Attended Logging and Tracking Grants and Conscious Leadership classes

Other

- Tried 3 GPS units on 2 site visits w/Lenny
- Civil Service
 - Organized statewide review material and division 5 review session
 - Took exam 12/7
- Black River Watershed Coalition meeting 11/7
 - I was appointed secretary for the coalition
 - We are working on by-laws and mission statement
- Attended Reconnecting Waterways workshop in VT with Lenny
 - Geomorphology, site assessment and field data collection, dam removal & culvert design demystified, construction process & methods for dam removals & culvert replacements, and elements of site restoration in barrier removal design
- Presented on The Great Migration to 43 Northville 7th graders on 11/22
- Attended DEC Forestry webinar 11/14
- Attended Mohawk River Watershed project brainstorming meeting with DEC and USGS

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

Submitted by: Ryan Cunningham – Region 4 Associate Environmental Analyst

NYS SWCC News

Happy Holidays & Merry Christmas! The holiday season is here again, a time for remembering our family and friends. Wishing you and all those close to you, a joyous holiday season and a new year of happiness!

Round 30 Agricultural Non-Point Source Program: The SWCC has made a total of \$25 million available for Round 30 competitive projects through the State Fiscal Year 2023-2024 budget. \$14 million will be sourced from the Environmental Protection Fund and \$11 million will be sourced from the Clean Water, Clean Air, Green Jobs Environmental Bond Act. The RFP and associated documents are now available on the SWCC SharePoint and are available on the Department of Ag and Markets website, <https://agriculture.ny.gov/rfp-0323-agricultural-nonpoint-source-pollution-abatement-and-control-program>. Questions regarding the RFP must be submitted in writing to jason.kokkinos@agriculture.ny.gov by **January 10th, 2024**.

Applications must be submitted through the NYS SWCC SharePoint website by **4:30 PM February 24, 2025**.

December SWCC Meeting: The next meeting of the NYS Soil and Water Conservation Committee will be on Tuesday, **December 17th starting at 10:00 AM**. Further details and an agenda for this meeting will be sent out in advance of the meeting. All Districts are encouraged to attend and participate in the meeting. Each meeting agenda provides an opportunity for Conservation Districts to provide reports, updates, or feedback to the SWCC. **Reminder – participation at a SWCC meeting is eligible toward PM1, Part C of State Aid to Districts.**

State Aid to Districts and Annual Reports: Many of this year's reports will be in a new format due to the discontinuance of the previously used program. However, the content of the forms will generally be the same. The annual report and performance measures report will be Google Docs; this will require each District to have a Google account. You should be able to use your regular district email and not have to create a Gmail account. If you have issues creating an account, contact Tyler Knapp Tyler.Knapp@agriculture.ny.gov or Chastity Miller Chastity.Miller@agriculture.ny.gov. Currently the hourly rates report, and the Treasurer's Report are available on SharePoint. The remaining reports will be released throughout the month of December and posted. All reports must be submitted by **February 15, 2025**.

2024 Part C Performance Measures: The end of the year is rapidly approaching, and you should be checking to make sure that your District is fulfilling its Performance Measure goals. Please contact your Regional AEA with any specific questions. Any performance measures special requests need to be received and approved by **December 31st, 2024**.

2024 Part B Projects: Any revised requests need to be submitted and approved by **December 31st, 2024**.

NYS Grown & Certified: A few New York State Grown & Certified opportunities have been posted recently, and some producers have been inquiring! The most up to date information and funding opportunities can be found here, <https://certified.ny.gov/> Every three years, participating producers or a majority of producers are required to participate/renew in the Agricultural Environmental Management (AEM) program update, with the completion of a Tier 2 or higher. An alternative option is to have an active CAFO permit. On our SWCC Sharepoint site, under "Resources for Districts" and "NYS Grown and Certified," you will find many forms relevant to Grown & Certified, along with information that should help with most questions received from farmers. If you need help accessing or gaining access to Sharepoint, please contact Tim Clark (tim.clark@agriculture.ny.gov.) This is a great opportunity to introduce new producers into AEM or reconnect with some familiar faces as they seek recertification. Questions about NYS Grown and Certified can be directed to NYSGrownandCertified@agriculture.ny.gov, as well as Chasity Miller, or your regional AEA.

CREP Annual Progress Report: It's that time of year again when New York State reports to USDA on outreach, success stories, challenges and provides suggestions related to the Conservation Reserve Enhancement Program (CREP). Please send anything you would like to share or any questions to Scott.Fickbohm@agriculture.ny.gov by **12/16/24**.

Other Events

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

Other Funding

Establishing Large Forests (ELF) Grant Program: DEC announced that \$4.5 Million is available for private landowners to establish new forests. Applications will be accepted until **3 p.m. on Tuesday, Jan. 7, 2025**. Applications must be submitted through the SFS Grants Management System (SFS). Those wishing to apply need to establish an account in SFS. Once registered, search SFS for “Establishing Large Forests” or “ELF.” <https://dec.ny.gov/news/press-releases/2024/10/dec-announces-45-million-in-new-grant-funding-to-establish-large-forests>

Five Star and Urban Waters Restoration Program 2025 Request for Proposals: The National Fish and Wildlife Foundation and partners are requesting proposals for the 2025. This program seeks to develop community capacity to sustain local natural resources by providing financial assistance to diverse local partnerships focused on improving water quality, watersheds and the species and habitats they support. Full proposals are **due by January 22nd, 2025**. To learn more about the grant program and the application guidelines, please go here, <https://www.nfwf.org/programs/five-star-and-urban-waters-restoration-grant-program/five-star-and-urban-waters>.

\$7 Million to Support Environmental Education Centers and Disadvantaged Communities: NYSDEC has made \$7 million in competitive grant funding available for community-based, not-for-profit, and tribal organizations to support the construction, or renovation of existing facilities, to create community environmental education centers, which will offer classes and programs on environmental awareness. The centers must be located within or serve a disadvantaged community or an environmental justice community. Funding is provided from the State’s EPF and is available to support capital costs of new construction or renovation proposals. Grants ranging from \$250,000 to \$3 million will be awarded. The deadline for all applications is **3 p.m. on Wednesday, January 22nd, 2025**. The request for applications (RFA) is only available online through The Statewide Financial System of New York (www.sfs.ny.gov)

**New York Association of Conservation Districts
Blanche Hurlbutt, Executive Director**

2025 NACD NE/NYACD Event: NYACD will be hosting the NACD NE annual event along with NY’s annual session in 2025. The dates have been set for Sunday, September 21-24, 2025. It will be at the DoubleTree Hilton, East Syracuse, NY. This event will be full of training sessions, annual meetings, and so much more. Our committee will be meeting Thursday, December 19th after the monthly NYACD meeting at 7:00 pm.

2025 NY Envirothon: The NYS Envirothon will be on Wednesday, May 28th and Thursday, May 29th, 2025. Once again it will be at SUNY Cortland, Cortland, NY. The NYS Envirothon website has been updated with all new pdf references. The oral presentation problem will be added to the NYS Envirothon website in January 2025 on the current issue topic “Roots and Resiliency: Fostering Forest Stewardship in a Canopy of Change.” The NYS Envirothon website is www.nysenvirothon.org. Check out the website. The next Envirothon meeting is scheduled for Thursday, December 5th at 11:00 a.m.

2025 Legislative Days: Legislative Days will be Monday, March 3rd, and Tuesday, March 4th, 2025. Signup will be going out next week December 16th-20th to districts and directors. Working on the 2025 Legislative Booklet. Will have completed once all the districts forward their projects. Starting to collaborate with Legislators to get on their schedule for Tuesday, March 4th.

There are a couple of proposed bills we are following: S7854 & S7628.

Great Lakes Commission: I attended a meeting with other Executive Directors in Ann Arbor, Michigan on November 19-22, 2024. While there each of the eight (8) states bordering the Great Lakes was in attendance and provided a slide show regarding information on their state’s soil and water districts. The second day we brainstormed on what was important to each state’s soil and water districts. The gentlemen from the Ohio University that is collaborating with us are formatting and compiling all the information to determine our next step. In the future each state representative will reach out to their local soil and water districts to complete a survey related to districts’ concerns, needs, etc. It was amazing to hear and see how far ahead New York soil and water conservations are with their training, funding, and projects.

Hamilton County Soil & Water District Information and Security Breach Notification Policy

Information and security breach notification policy

1. Purpose

This policy has been established to require that the Hamilton County Soil and Water Conservation District take reasonable technological measures to protect its computerized data, and to notify the public when the possibility of an unauthorized acquisition or dissemination of their personal information may occur as a result of a security breach of the District’s computer system or database.

2. Application

This policy shall apply to all departments, boards, agencies and commissions of the Hamilton County Soil and Water Conservation District __

3. Definitions

- A. “Breach of the security of the system” shall mean the unauthorized acquisition or dissemination of computerized data which compromises the security, confidentiality

or integrity of personal information maintained by the Hamilton County Soil and Water Conservation District. Good faith acquisition of personal information by a Hamilton County Soil and Water Conservation District officer or employee or agent thereof is not a breach of the security of the system, provided that the personal information is not used or subject to further unauthorized disclosure.

- B. “Personal information” shall mean any information concerning a natural person which, because of name, number, personal mark or other identifier, can be used to identify such natural person. Personal information shall include, but not be limited to:
1. social security number;
 2. driver’s license number;
 3. account number, credit or debit card number, in combination with any required security code, access code, or password which would permit access to an individual’s financial account.

Personal information does not include publicly available information that is lawfully made available to the general public from federal, state or local records.

- C. “Unauthorized acquisition or dissemination of personal information” shall include access by an unauthorized person and/or dissemination by a Hamilton County Soil and Water Conservation District officer, employee or agent who decides to sell or misuse confidential, sensitive or personal information.

4. Technological Measures

Hamilton County Soil and Water Conservation District, through its IT Contractor, shall take any technological measures it deems reasonable and appropriate in order to protect the District’s computer data and to alert the District to any possible breach in its security system.

5. Notification

The Hamilton County Soil and Water Conservation District shall disclose any breach of the security of its computer system following discovery or notification of a breach in the security of its computerized data to any resident of New York State whose personal information was, or is reasonably believed to have been, acquired by, or disseminated to, an unauthorized person.

6. Reporting Form for Notification

The form for the Hamilton County Soil and Water Conservation District to disclose the breach of any such security is the New York State Security Breach Reporting Form.

https://its.ny.gov/system/files/documents/2024/01/state_databreach_form.pdf

7. Types of Notification

Notice shall be directly provided to the affected person(s) by one of the following methods:

- A. Written Notice
- B. Substitute Notice, if the Hamilton County Soil and Water Conservation District demonstrates that the cost of providing notice would be overly excessive, or if the

Hamilton County Soil and Water Conservation District does not have sufficient contract information. Substitute notice shall consist of all of the following:

1. e-mail notice if the e-mail address of the person is readily available to the Hamilton County Soil and Water Conservation District;
2. conspicuous posting of the notice on the Hamilton County Soil and Water Conservation District's web site; and
3. notification to the local newspaper.

8. Notification Timeframe

- A. The notification to any resident of New York State whose information may have been disclosed shall be made in the most expedient time possible and without unreasonable delay subject to the discovery or notification of a breach in the security of the computerized data.
- B. the legitimate needs of law enforcement, as provided in Section IX below; or
- C. any measures necessary to determine the scope of the breach and restore the reasonable integrity of the data system.

9. Law Enforcement Considerations

The notification required by this Executive Order may be delayed if a law enforcement agency determines that such notification impedes a criminal investigation. The notification required by this section shall be made after such law enforcement agency determines that such notification does not compromise such investigation.

10. Policy Consistent with Federal, State and Local Laws, Rules and Regulations

This Executive Order is specifically intended to be consistent with New York State Technology Law §208.

11. Effective Date

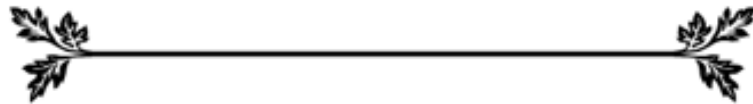
This Executive Order shall take effect immediately and shall remain in effect until otherwise superseded or revoked.

Adopted at the December 11, 2024 Board of Directors' Meeting.

Chairperson's Signature

Distribution: All Hamilton County Soil and Water Conservation District staff and Directors

2025 Board of Directors Meeting Schedule
9:30 AM at the Hamilton County SWCD office and on Zoom
The public is welcome to attend



January 7

February 4

March 5

April 1

May 6

June 3

July 1

August 5

September 2

October 7

November 5

December 2