

CDEA News ON DISTRICT

ON DUTY TODAY

Wyoming

NEW YORK STATE
CONSERVATION DISTRICT
EMPLOYEES' ASSOCIATION, INC.



**Ronny
Raindrop®
COLORING
CONTEST**

Winners will receive
a \$25.00 cash prize!
see coloring chart for
contest details

SOIL JOKES

August 2024



Cover Photo

The Wyoming County SWCD Technicians made their way to the Great New York State Fair! They had a full day of interacting with the public and talking about what we do as a Conservation District in Wyoming Co. If you're headed to the Great NYS Fair be sure to come check out the booth in the Horticulture building and see which county is on duty!!



The CDEA Corner

Late summer greetings! Please take a few minutes to refill your mug or water bottle and enjoy the August CDEA News.

Registration for the 2024 **Conservation Skills Workshop is due September 2.**

[Register here.](#)

[Course descriptions and schedule here.](#)

We held a brief, virtual **July CDEA meeting** to pay the bills, approve Frank Bratt Scholarship applications, and the 2024-2025 CDEA Committees and Appointments. Minutes and agendas are available at www.nyscdea.com/

The **September CDEA** meeting is September 11, 12:00 p.m. - 4:30 p.m., and September 12, 8:00 a.m. - 12:00 p.m. Join virtually or in person at Great Camp Sagamore <1105 Sagamore Rd, Raquette Lake, NY 13436>. I emailed the agenda and meeting materials state wide. Contact your Division Rep for details.

SWCD staff are working booth shifts at the **Great New York State Fair**. The NYS Fair Committee selected the theme *Conservation Districts: Then and Now* for the 2024 and 2025 events, and District history, current work, and careers are being spotlighted. Thank you, committee members and volunteers! If you visit the Fair, stop by and visit with us in the Horticulture Building!

Save the date for the 2024 **Administrative Conference: November 18 - 19, 2024**, Saratoga Springs, NY. Agenda to arrive in your inbox.

Save the date for the 2025 **Water Quality Symposium: March 11 - 14, 2025, Rochester Hyatt**. CDEA Vice President Jessica Armstrong is coordinating event logistics, and track chairs are working on their class schedules.

Northeast Association of Conservation District Employees update:

- National Association of Conservation Districts 79th annual meeting will be held February 8 – 12, 2025, in Salt Lake City, Utah.

I again emailed Mr. Cavazos, Municipal Assistance Unit regarding **civil service** challenges. Focus areas included updating the pool of testing questions 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.

See Corner, page 3.

Corner (from page 2)

The NCF- Envirothon was a tremendous success. Thank you, committee members and volunteers! The Mount Academy of Ulster County received first place, and will represent New York at the NCF-Envirothon.

A sub-committee was formed to update the **CDEA By-Laws**, addressing feedback received after the most recent revisions were printed for the 2024 annual meeting.

I attended the following meetings and events to ensure CDEA's support of and contribution to the 4-Way Partnership and beyond:

- July and August Soil and Water Conservation Committee meetings
- June and August State Program Advisory Committee meetings. Thank you, Chenango County SWCD's Jennifer Kelly for providing feedback to this committee!
- June New York Association of Conservation Districts meeting
- Volunteered at the NCF-Envirothon
- Worked a booth shift at the Great New York State Fair
- Coordinating and instructing classes at Cons Skills and the NYACD Annual Meeting
- Charing the Education Track for the 2025 Water Quality Symposium. Thank you, Tioga County SWCD's Danielle Singer for your longstanding service and positive energy to this track!

Please contact your Division Representative or me with questions or concerns. I wish you the very best with your upcoming programs and projects as we turn our calendars to September!

Kindest regards,



Caitlin Stewart, MS, President, NYS CDEA



*who*wore
*it*better?

My alter ego, Ronny Raindrop, on a SUP at Adirondack Waterfest (right). I am hoping to one-up the Grass Whisperer's [Facebook Reel](#) of Ronny spreading the word of NY conservation (left)!



Conservation Skills Workshop

September 23 - 26, 2024
Holiday Inn, Auburn, NY

Registration due September 2
[Click here for more info](#)

Save the date



Admin Conference
November 18 - 19, 2024
Saratoga Springs, NY

Agenda to arrive in your inbox

Local Conservationist Awarded for her Inspired Work Troy Bishopp, Grazing Specialist, Upper Susquehanna Coalition

Owego, NY---“Sometimes the bravest and the most important thing you can do is just show up” ~ Brene Brown.

According to many farmers, community leaders, conservation peers and friends, Water Quality and Nutrient Management Specialist, Danielle Singer from the Tioga County Soil and Water Conservation District is always showing up for her local community. From her job at the district working with farmers, planting trees in the watershed, being on the Tioga CCE board or scooping ice-cream during the “Sundaes on the Farm” event, her passion and drive to help is getting noticed.

Tioga County SWCD Board Member and local Lions Club Member Jake Brown recently presented Danielle with a Robert J. Uplinger Distinguished Service Award from the New York State and Bermuda Lions Club Foundation. The award is in “recognition of outstanding dedicated work of promoting agriculture programs, stewardship and education in Tioga County”.

Tioga County SWCD District Manager, Wendy Walsh said, “I can’t say enough about how hard she works to lead our ag program and pull all the outreach components together to help tell our story. Her dedication to growing and promoting agricultural programs, partnering with other organizations and coordinating events that expand the public’s understanding of agriculture in our county is inspiring. She’s an asset to our team and our community and we’re proud to see her recognized for the many hours

she puts in away from her family”.

“I am very honored to receive this award,” said Singer. “It means so much to me because I believe bringing conservation practices that protect and enhance our water and soils to local farmers and landowners is incredibly important to the future of agriculture”. “I think of my son and see my rewarding work will ensure there is a sustainable and healthy local food system for him. I love Tioga County’s agricultural community, and I enjoy working with producers. Thank you for this recognition”.



Lions Club Member Jake Brown awards Danielle Singer with Robert J. Uplinger Distinguished Service Award.

EASTERN HEMLOCKS, FOREST HEALTH, AND THREATS TO THE FUTURE

A Forest Health Workshop that will focus on managing our forests for adaptation and resiliency with exploration of known threats affecting our forest ecosystems.

SEPTEMBER 21, 2024

8:00 AM - 3:00 PM

YMCA Camp Chingachgook

1872 Pilot Knob Road, Kattskill Bay 12844



Register by **September 12, 2024** at

<https://warrenswcd.org/hemlocks/> or using the QR code.

There is a \$10 non-refundable registration fee. Registration fee is waived for NYSCDEA members. Space is limited and will be allocated on a first-come, first-served basis.

Applications for continuing education credits have been submitted to Society of American Foresters, NY Logger Training, International Society of Arborists, Pesticide, and American Planning Association, and will be made available to view on our website as they are accepted.

Hear from experts in the field as they discuss forest management, threats to forest ecosystems, integrated pest management, Hemlock Woolly Adelgid and Beech Leaf Disease, and attend a forest training to identify forest pests and diseases.



Sponsored in part by:



A Journey Through Grazing

Troy Bishopp, Grazing Specialist, Upper Susquehanna Coalition

Owego, NY—Fresh off the 2023/2024 Chesapeake Bay and Watershed Report Card that indicated the Upper Susquehanna River in New York received the 2nd highest quality score (B-) of all the Bay state jurisdictions, a group of farmers celebrated at a recent Tioga County pasture walk.

“Rotational grazing has been a lifetime journey of learning and now it’s extra important in the case for maintaining water quality for my downstream neighbors”, said Marvin Moyer, host of the pasture meeting.

Marvin and Mildred Moyer along with their family members have been organically raising 100% grass-fed beef cattle at Twin Brook Farm on their acreage for over 35 years, along with chickens, pigs and sheep, and selling meat directly from the farm for decades. “It’s been a passion of mine that customers appreciate, as we show and tell, how our management compliments the holistic goals of the watershed”, said Moyer. “I want to help solve the problem and not be a part of it. I want to be the solution.”

Before Marvin Moyer purchased an additional 90+ acres of farmland adjacent to Little Nanticoke Creek, he

was already safeguarding the land and water cycle on his property by running a rotational grazing system and keeping perennial plant communities intact. The twilight walk introduced farmers to Moyers cow/calf pastures, management style and his genetic base and moved into plant identification by Cortland CCE Field Crops Specialist, Janice Degni. Cortland CCE Dairy Specialist, Betsy Hicks



Betsy Hicks talks about forage quality and inventory for beef animals.

helped guests learn about grass growth indicators, forage inventory measurements and animal nutrition guidelines given the sward that was there.

Marvin provided a wagon ride to his “new” land that crossed over the creek where significant conservation work was doing its job.

The creek became a lesson plan and practical farmer “rock turnovers” led by Tioga County’s CCE Ag Educator, Kelly Jackson, in identifying beneficial Benthic macro-invertebrates, such as mayflies, stoneflies, and caddisflies that are indicators of water quality who live at the bottom of water bodies. Upon observation, the Moyers are clearly helping their stream ecosystem.

Tioga County Soil and Water Conservation District Professionals, Heather Gulliford and Danielle Singer highlighted the work and technical assistance put on the ground working with Marvin to create a legacy project for generations. Work included: Creek berm removal reconnecting to the flood plain, installation of 11,000 feet of fencing and 4,800 feet of waterline for two watering systems to facilitate rotational grazing in their new pastures,

See Grazing page 8,

Grazing (from page 7)

a five acre riparian forest buffer with cattle exclusion fencing on both sides of the 1,400 foot stream reach and a 3-acre upland tree planting project dedicated to fruit, mast and wildlife habitat species with adjacent wetland pond to increase biodiversity on the farm.

His grazing system is now 160+ acres for his 40 cow/calf, replacement and finishing herds.

“These localized get-togethers on a

farm to share experiences, ideas and see what’s happening on the land is an approach that is unmatched”, said Singer. “Getting farmers together and making connections to their land within a holistic context is really energizing towards our Agricultural Environmental Management Program goals here at the district and with our regional partners at Cornell Cooperative Extension and the Upper Susquehanna Coalition”, emphasized Gulliford.

To learn more about Tioga County SWCD and CCE Programs call (607) 972-2365



A group of farmers take a look at Moyers riparian buffer tree planting site.



Danielle and Kelly.

**CDEA News
needs YOUR news!**

Email your stories, photos, save the dates,
and fun moments
to Caitlin Stewart, Hamilton County SWCD

Special columns!
Cover Photo
CDEA Wine and Pint Glass Tour
Where in New York is Ronny Raindrop?
Good Eats

Visit www.nyscdea.com for newsletter back issues

SWCDs Team Up to Host Ag BMP Workshop with CDEA 4-Hour Funds

Megan Webster, District Manager, Ontario County Soil and Water Conservation District

Ontario, Seneca and Yates County Soil and Water Conservation Districts teamed up to host a 2-day training for Conservation District Employees. This field-based training event was led by senior level SWCD technicians and was specifically focused on the design and implementation of structural erosion control BMPs on agricultural lands. We toured 5 different farm project sites and worked through many real-life project implementation scenarios. A big thank you to the NYS Conservation District Employee Association for providing funding support and to the Town of Geneva, NY for letting us use their meeting room space for this great event!



Where in New York is **Ronny Raindrop**?



We had a surprise visitor at our Cortland County Buffer Steward Workday. Ronny Raindrop came out to help us monitor 3,500 plants that were planted as a riparian buffer on 18 acres back in 2020. With the help from Ronny we performed maintenance throughout the buffer by fixing tubes and stakes. Special thanks to Cortland County SWCD, Chenango County SWCD, Broome County SWCD, Otsego County SWCD, and Tioga County SWCD that joined us for this Buffer Steward Workday.

Where in New York is **Ronny Raindrop?**

Ronny Raindrop made a very special guest appearance at Adirondack Waterfest. Over 425 people of all ages splashed into Speculator for the event hosted by the Hamilton County SWCD with funding from the Finger Lakes—Lake Ontario Watershed Protection Alliance.





Photo Album



Cortland County SWCD's Shawn Murphy



Ice Cream Boyz! CDEA Division II Rep Jason Cuddeback and Troy Bishopp, Madison County SWCD.



CDEA Division II Rep Jason Cuddeback sure does dig healthy soil!



All smiles at a recent pasture walk on a beautiful night in Tioga County.



Cortland County SWCD were on hand at an Organic Valley Cooperative Dairy meeting to showcase their technical assistance.



Photo Album



Madison SWCD at the local fair



USC Buffer Steward training and work day in Otsego County.



Madison County hosted a USC buffer steward work day with Tioga, Oneida, and Otsego professionals.



Tommy Conklin installing a pasture water system.



The SWCD booth at the Great New York State Fair looks fantastic, as always!

Annual NYS CDEA Fish On Challenge

The NYSCDEA is sponsoring a fishing challenge to all anglers out there.



Participation Fee is \$10.00 per person and each participant will receive a NYSCDEA pocket tape measure (**If you haven't received a tape already). Registration is available for NYSCDEA members only.

Submission form [HERE](#) for the Fish On Challenge

There are Seven Categories and prizes in each: *New* Saltwater Fish

Smallmouth Bass

Largemouth Bass

Northern Pike

Trout Special

→ Comradery Catch!
For the spirit of friendship and good times with the family!

Jokers Wild

General Rules

- You are not eligible to enter a fish if you caught it while in a professional tournament.
- Only one prize per fish.
- Entries are limited to those caught from NY waters only (including boundary waters).
- Entries will be scored based on length except for
 - **Jokers Wild** will be judged on uniqueness of species, size and location of catch. Participant will have to specify why they think the fish is unique and why it should win.
 - **Comradery Catch** will be judged based on species, fishing story (optional), location, etc.
 - **Trout** will be judged based on length, species, and location of catch.

Enter a Fish: the participant is required to submit the following information to [Google Forms](#) or Fishcdea@gmail.com:

1. Name
2. Date caught
3. Species
4. Length
5. Location (waterbody)
6. Picture of fish with you or a measuring tape!
7. If entering the... Jokers Wild category you must include why the fish is unique and why it should win the category.

*All entries need to be submitted between
March 1, 2024 – February 28, 2025*

Examples for pictures:



Winners of all categories will be announced at the 2025 WQS Banquet.

Register for the Fish On Challenge [HERE](#)

If you have any questions, comments or if you are interested in registering, contact Katie WhitKovits at: Fishcdea@gmail.com.



**Agriculture
and Markets**



**Soil and Water
Conservation
Committee**

KATHY HOCHUL
Governor

RICHARD A. BALL
Commissioner

DALE STEIN
Committee Chair

To: SWCDs
From: Brian Steinmuller, Assistant Director *Brian Steinmuller*
Date: July 9, 2024
Subject: New Associate Environmental Analysts (AEAs) serving as AgNPS/Water Quality Program and AEM Base Program Managers

Please join me in welcoming Jason Kokkinos and Chastity Miller to the New York State Soil and Water Conservation Committee (State Committee)/NYS AGM Staff as the Agricultural Nonpoint Source Abatement and Control/Water Quality Programs and the Agricultural Environmental Management (AEM) Base Program Managers respectively.

Jason Kokkinos formally served as an Environmental Analyst with the State Committee from 2019-2021. As an Environmental Analyst, Jason assisted in the administration of the AgNPS Program and was responsible for data management and program analysis. After which he served as an Environmental Analyst with the Lake George Park Commission. We are pleased to have Jason return to the State Committee as the AgNPS and associated Water Quality Program Manager. Please send all claims for payments and contract correspondence for the AgNPS, CAFO WSTP, CAFO ENMP and Source Water Buffer Programs to Jason.

Chastity Miller served as the Franklin County SWCD Manager for 16 years from 2008-July 2024. During this time, Chastity also served in various capacities with the Conservation District Employees' Association, including as President where she has been integral in statewide SWCD advancement and SWCC Program development. Chastity will be serving as the AEM Base Program Manager and responsible for coordinating SWCD training opportunities statewide and assisting in the further advancement of AEM related program materials/technical tools. Please send all claims for payments and contract correspondence for the AEM Base Program to Chastity.

To reach Jason and Chastity:

Jason Kokkinos, AEA
Office: 518-457-7374
Cell: 518-949-9633
Email: jason.kokkinos@agriculture.ny.gov

Chastity Miller, AEA
Office and Cell: 518-573-7021
Email: chastity.miller@agriculture.ny.gov

Thank you!



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

CDEA September 2024 Report Respectfully

Submitted by Blanche L. Hurlbutt, NYACD Ex. Dir.

2024 NCF Envirothon NY: It was an enormous success and a lot of demanding work. We had many great volunteers thorough the week, which made the event so much better. The NY team took second place and did a wonderful job representing us. We are still working on the details of the final bill to the college, but at this point the received invoices are paid.

2024 NE NACD/NACD Event: The annual summer NE NACD/NACD meeting held in Boston. This was a good event, and much was shared, learned, and interesting. I attended several sessions with discussions on climate change, concerns, and issues folks in Massachusetts have regarding this issue. As well as what is working for districts, what challenges they have, and how can NACD help. While there we took the duck tour to learn about Boston at the Conservation Forum. Attended a meeting on a new NACD program called Clean Forests and Water. *Their mission is to create a collaborative network that leverages resources to manage, restore, and conserve forests and protect water resources.* They have two pilot states, Connecticut, and Ohio, presently working with foresters to produce clean water through forestry. Discussions took place on how to increase and promote membership of NE NACD/NACD, farm bill, youth conservation and leaders in high school. The Partnership folks reported on different programs and projects.

The Boston Urban Ag Conservation tour and we learned about the two diverse types Urban/Community Gardens and how the teens within the communities work together to provide food for the community and sell items at farm stands. We toured Bristol high school which provides a full education program plus vocational hands-on subjects such as veterinary, animal grooming, farming, wildlife, etc. We traveled to a cranberry farm and learned all about how cranberries are grown and harvested.

Shino from NYC SWCD received the NE NACD award.

2025 NE NACD/NYACD Event: Next year NYACD will be hosting the 2025 NE NACD meeting in NY. I have been discussing with Sam & Scott potential locations along with working on an RFP. We have discussed hosting this in late September and joining our NYACD annual meeting at the same time. Others hosting NE NACD events have done this way in the past. More information will be provided as we move forward finalizing the event. RFPs completed and sent to hotels in Syracuse, Albany, Plattsburg, Lake Placid, Saratoga, Cooperstown.

Annual 2024 NYACD: The NYACD annual registration packets have been completed and emailed/mailed to folks. Registrations have started to come in. I will send reminders by email weekly to districts and directors. I sent sponsorship requests and invites to our partners and Commissioner Ball to speak at the annual business meeting. Guest speaker for the annual banquet/luncheon will be Nika Colley, NE NACD representative.



Executive Committee Members

President: Caitlin Stewart
Hamilton County SWCD

Vice President: Jessica Armstrong
Oneida County SWCD

Secretary: Joann Burke
Madison County SWCD

Treasurer: Katy Kemmeren
Chenango County SWCD

Member At Large: Alice Halloran
Essex County SWCD

Partners

Natural Resources Conservation Service:
Blake Glover

New York Association of Conservation Districts:
Blanche L. Hurlbutt

Soil and Water Conservation Committee:
Bethany Bzduch

Division Representatives

Division I: Rebecca Campbell
Wyoming County SWCD

Division II: Jason Cuddeback
Cayuga County SWCD

Division III: Carla Yaw
Lewis County SWCD

Division IV: Lydia Brinkley
Tioga County SWCD

Division V: Maren Stoddard
Warren County SWCD

Division VI: Nicholas Klemczak
Schenectady County SWCD

Division VII: Travis Ferry
Ulster County SWCD

Division VIII: Olivia Cunningham
Nassau County SWCD