

Cover Photo

Early winter hike to Fawn Lake, Adirondacks. Photo by Caitlin Stewart, Manager, Hamilton Count Soil and Water Conservation District.



The CDEA Corner

Caitlin Stewart, President, NYS CDEA, Inc.

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

The **January CDEA** meeting is The January CDEA meeting is January 22, 2025, 12:00 p.m. - 4:00 p.m., and January 23, 2025, 8:00 a.m. - 12:00 p.m. You are welcome and encouraged to attend. Join in person at the Hyatt Regency Rochester 125 E Main St, Rochester, NY 14604 or virtually. Meeting agenda to follow, and board approved minutes are available on the CDEA website: https://www.nyscdea.com/agenda-minutes/

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

- SWCC November meeting. Thank you CDEA Division I Representative Rebecca Campbell for attending the December meeting on my behalf!
- NYACD December meeting
- 4-Way Partnership meeting
- Invasive Species Advisory Committee and Invasive Species Council meeting, serving as Secretary

The NYS Erosion and Sediment Control Certificate Program's Steering Committee brought forward concerns to the CDEA board including advertising and endorsement of training, program changes / recommendations, and instructor recruitment and participation. Division Reps Nick Klemczak and Lydia Brinkley will attend Steering Committee meetings to improve communication.

4-Way Partnership Meeting summary: Thank you, SWCC Executive Director Bethany Bzduch for facilitating! I emailed Districts a request for feedback regarding 2 resolutions that were unanimously passed at the NYACD annual meeting. I collected and shared responses from Districts who have experienced a backlog of NRCS project cultural reviews, and challenges due to NYS Retirement Tier 5 and 6 parameters. During the meeting, NRCS State Conservationist Blake Glover reported that NRCS experienced a backlog of cultural resource reviews because they lacked cultural resource specialists. Since then, NRCS has made headway. Any cultural resources sent in with ties to SWCD funds were their first priority. Anything obligated this year has been approved by NRCS. 2 cultural resource specialists are coming on board from Kansas or Oklahoma. Until then, New York State has support from Maine NRCS for cultural resource reviews. If your Conservation District is waiting for a NRCS Cultural Resource review, contact Blake directly. NYACD Executive Director Blanche Hurlbutt reported that she contacted New York State Retirement and was told that Districts should go to their local county and request they pick up the difference between Tier 4 and Tier 6. NYS Retirement is working on the issue. Other discussion topics included SWCD career development, a SWCD public awareness initiative, and conservation program delivery—technical, engineering, and managerial support. Action items: compile a list of the types of

employees SWCDs are seeking to hire, gather outreach and leveraging tools, assess what colleges and BOCES chapters have worked with SWCDs and in what capacity, and internship programs.

During the November CDEA meeting, **special guests** presented on the NAACC transition to Southeast Aquatic Resources Partnership, Fish and Wildlife Habitat Restoration and Enhancement project type within the Department of Water's Water Quality Improvement Project (WQIP), National Association of Conservation Districts Northeast Region, and NY Outcome Fund.

CDEA continues to research hiring a **lobbyist and attorney**.

184 District staff and partners attended the 2024 Conservation Skills Workshop. Thank you to the entire committee for offering another invaluable event.

The **Administrative Conference** was another tremendous success. A record breaking 64 people attended. Thank you, Committee Chairs Dustin Lewis and Kaitlyn Bemis, and all Districts, partners, and presenters involved!

CDEA by-laws and handbook review and revisions continue.

NYS DEC Endorsed 4-Hour Erosion & Sediment Control Online Training – Kristin White reported that the new platform **BlackBoard** is now live.

Committees are working hard to organize the Water Quality Symposium, New York State Fair, Farm Show, and New York State Envirothon. CDEA Vice President Jessica Armstrong has done an incredible job with organizing the 2025 Water Quality Symposium, and registration will be out soon.

I am working with SWCC's Ryan Cunningham and P.J. Emerick to host a **Municipal Assistance Subcommittee** meeting addressing DEC permitting challenges.

Preliminary work with SWCC's Tyler Knapp and Division Reps to coordinate ArcPro trainings.

Information requests: chatted with a new manager and answered inquiries, insurance stipend, NRCS cultural resources review, retirement system reform.

Upcoming Events

- SWCC's State Programs Advisory Committee meeting January 8, 2025, 9:30 a.m. 12:00 p.m.
- National Association of Conservation Districts 79th annual meeting
 February 8 12, 2025
 Salt Lake City, Utah
 https://www.nacdnet.org/news-and-events/annual-meeting/
- CDEA's Water Quality Symposium
 March 11 14, 2025

 Rochester Hyatt
 Registration to follow

• NACD Northeast and NYACD annual event and session

September 21 - 24, 2025 DoubleTree Hilton, East Syracuse, NY Information to follow

• New York State Envirothon

May 28 - 29, 2025 SUNY Cortland

• CDEA Golf Tournament

August 7, 2025 Casolwood Golf Course, Canastota Information to follow

Please contact your Division Representative or me with questions or concerns. I wish you the absolute best with your upcoming programs and projects as we turn our calendars to 2025. Happy New Year!

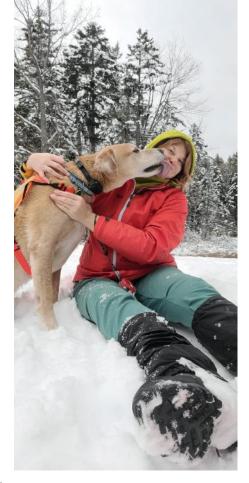
Kindest regards,

Cartlin Stewert

Caitlin Stewart, MS, President, NYS CDEA

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The hidden spark of a winter's dream sleeps in a forest of celestial luminance. ~ Robbie George





Monroe County Soil & Water Conservation District

145 Paul Road, Building #5, Rochester, NY 14624 Phone: (585) 753-7380 • email: mcswcd@monroecounty.gov

Erosion & Sediment Control Training NYS DEC-endorsed 4-hour GP-0-20-001

January 8, 2025 8:30am – 1:00pm



Under the NYS Department of Environmental Conservation's Stormwater Permit GP-0-20-001, all developers, contractors and subcontractors must identify at least one *trained contractor* from their company that will be responsible for implementation of the SWPPP, and have at least one *trained contractor* on site on a daily basis when soil disturbance activities are being performed. Also, developers must have a *qualified inspector* conduct regular site inspections in accordance with GP-0-20-001.

Code Enforcement Officers & Planning Board/Zoning Board of Appeals members may use this course as 4 hours of Professional Development Elective Credits. The individuals completing the training may also need to provide DOS with a copy of their wallet card or certificate of course completion, if requested.

*Qualified inspectors and trained contractors must have 4 hours of training in the principles and practices of erosion and sediment control endorsed by NYS DEC, SWCD, NYS Erosion & Sediment Control Certificate Program, or CPESC, Inc. Training is good for 3 years. Training is **not** required for CPESC, LA, NYSE&SCCP, and PE certified persons. Upon completion of the course, each participant will receive a NYS DEC Stormwater Training Number on a certificate and wallet card good for 3 years. Certificates and wallet cards will be issued to trainees after the class is held.

This training does not allow contractors to conduct their own Qualified Weekly Inspections.

LOCATION:

Virtual Class via Zoom – Each student <u>must have a camera</u> on their computer, tablet, or phone and an internet connection. Screen shots of the attendees will be conducted at the beginning of the course, every hour thereafter, and at the conclusion of the course. <u>Students attending must not be working i.e. on a job site, driving, or performing other work duties during the virtual training.</u> If this is observed by the instructors, the student will be removed from the zoom course and will not receive a training certificate.

A ZOOM training registration link will be emailed to the attendee no later than one day prior to the class.

COST: \$100 per person, non-refundable

Pre-payment required; payment must be received by <u>January 6, 2025</u>. Payment can be made in the form of cash, check or credit card payment. Please make checks payable to MCSWCD and mail to 145 Paul Road, Building #5, Rochester, NY 14624. If you would like to make a credit card payment, please click on the online payment link found in your registration form or call our office to make a credit card payment over the phone.

Free for Monroe County Municipal Staff that are members of the Stormwater Coalition of Monroe County

Registration begins at 8:00am; Presentation will begin at 8:30am. Anyone logging-in after 8:45am will be denied admittance into the session.

PRE-REGISTRATION INFORMATION:

PRE-REGISTRATION IS **REQUIRED** by <u>January 3, 2025</u>.

Register Online at https://monroecountyswcd.org/4-hour-trainings/

Limited capacity. Class filled on 1st come, 1st serve basis.

Due to assigned training numbers, no substitutions or transfers are allowed after registration date!

INSTRUCTORS: Kelly Emerick, CPESC, CPSWQ, CPMSM – Monroe County SWCD

James Sroka, Monroe County SWCD Don Stribick, CPESC – Erie County SWCD

**More Training Available **

For scheduled training please check the NYS DEC (https://www.dec.ny.gov/chemical/8694.html#Erosion_Sediment_Training) and Monroe County SWCD (www.monroecountyswed.org) websites.

Hydroseeding is Popular in Genesee County

Rebecca Olsen, Conservation Technician, Genesee County Soil & Water Conservation District

Genesee County SWCD staff have been hard at work to build and strengthen relationships with county and municipality personnel within the last few years. Most notably with our hydroseeding services to stabilize soil of completed projects! These projects range from culvert replacements to ditch cleanings and disturbances from construction at public parks.

In 2024, staff successfully hydroseeded over 13 acres of disturbed soils (over 2,000 pounds of seed!). This acreage was divided between

seven (7) towns, the county highway, and the county park. As a District, we have officially seeded *over triple* the

acreage since 2022! We hope to continue furthering these relationships and keep increasing our total seeded acreage for next year!



Figure 3: Technician Tim hard at work hydroseeding!



Figure 1: Before (left) & After (right) of a town parks transition from a Waste Transfer Station to now grassed field for public recreation



Figure 2: Before (left) & After (right) of hydroseeding newly graded soil to divert water from the towns salt

Frank Bratt Memorial Scholarship

Requesting Applications!

Deadlines:

MARCH 1ST, JUNE 1ST, SEPTEMBER 1ST, DECEMBER 1ST

The Frank Bratt Memorial
Scholarship was initiated in
1990 to assist District
employees with furthering
their professional
development and education.
This scholarship can
encompass a broad range of
topics, with emphasis placed
upon conservation related
topics and subjects related to
District function.

Send To: Rebecca Campbell -Wyoming County SWCD

36 Center Street—Suite D Warsaw, NY 14569 rcampbell@wcswcd.onmicrosoft.com 585-786-3675

2025 Hot Training Topics:

- Global E Training—Autodesk
 Civ3D (self paced)
- Cornell Pro Dairy Training
- ESRI—Arc GIS Pro Trainings



Beaver Deceiver Installation Complete

Joe Braun, Technician, Schenectady County Soil & Water Conservation District

The Schenectady County Soil and Water Conservation District installed a beaver deceiver on Onderdonk Road. Beavers were damming up the culvert causing the neighboring properties and the road to flood. The town was routinely clearing the culvert but it would be plugged up that very night. We successfully installed fencing on both sides of the road to prevent them from being able to dam up the culvert again. With the help of Schenectady County DPW The District was able to successfully hydroseed all over the County. We estimate that we hydroseeded approximately 7 acres of roadside ditches.





Meet the Newcomers!

Introducing the newest Soil and Water Conservation District employees

Kaitlyn Boyle, Environmental Planner Suffolk County Soil and Water Conservation District

How long have you been working for your Soil and Water Conservation District?

I have been with the district for a year and a half.

How would you describe your job to a group of 5-year-olds?

I help protect soil so farmers can grow what we need to make food!

Who inspired you to pursue the career you have today?

I used to love watching nature documentaries as a kid and always knew I wanted to work with the environment in one way or another.

What are your hobbies?

I like hiking around Long Island and spending time with my children.



What's the most epic thing you're working on right now at work?

Right now I am working on becoming a CCA.

Coffee or tea?
Coffee!

Share a humorous or memorable moment you have experienced while working at your District.

My most memorable moment while at the District is learning to drive a tractor!

What's on your bucket list?

At the top of my bucket list is to visit the Galapagos Islands.

Hawaiian pizza with ham and pineapple: super gross or supersize my pie?

Super Gross

What is the best advice you give to other new District employees?

Always be ready for change!

Meet the Newcomers!

Introducing the newest Soil and Water Conservation District employees

LeighAnn Montaglione, Soil District Technician Suffolk County Soil and Water Conservation District

How long have you been working for your Soil and Water Conservation District?

I have worked for the Suffolk County Soil and Water Conservation District for 1 year and 6 months.

Who inspired you to pursue the career you have today?

People that inspired to pursue my career are Jane Goodall, and Rachel Carson.

What are your hobbies?

My Hobbies include nature photography and writing.

What's on your bucket list?

One of things on my bucket list is hike and photographing all 50 states

Hawaiian pizza with ham and pineapple: super gross or supersize my pie?

Hawaiian pizza is gross and should not be a thing.

What is the best advice you give to other new District employees?

Best advice to new district employees is to be ready to learn something new every day.

How would you describe your job to a group of 5-year-olds?

I would explain that help farms and the environment.

What's the most epic thing you're working on right now at work?

The most epic thing I am working on is the coastal restoration projects.

Coffee or tea?

I prefer tea over coffee.

Share a humorous or memorable moment you have experienced while working at your District

One of the most memorable moments for me working at the district was learning how to take care farm equipment.

Where in New York is Ronny Raindrop?

Please note: black pants and a black long sleeved shirt must be worn with the costume.

Ronny Raindrop® recently accompanied Oswego County SWCD Senior Technician Erica Schreiner on an adventure to Iceland in late October. I was part of a 4 person self-drive group and we traveled from Reykjavik, along the southern coastline. Highlights included Northern lights, glaciers, icebergs, waterfalls, black sand beaches, columns of basalt, geysers, volcanic craters, more sheep than people, and harbor seals. Highly recommend Iceland for outdoorsy people who like to travel.







Where in New York is Ronny Raindrop®?

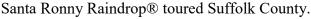
Please note: black pants and a black long sleeved shirt must be worn with the costume.



Ronny Raindrop® was decked in festive lights, garland, and elf hat for the holiday season at the Schoharie County Soil & Water Conservation District.



Ronny Raindrop® participated at a Utica Comets Trick- or-Treat at the Nexus Center. He is with Sparky the Fire dog, the Utica Fire Department's mascot.











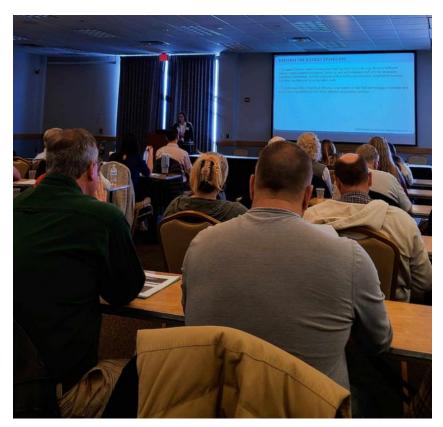
CDEA's Administrative Conference was another tremendous success. A record breaking 64 people attended trainings including What to Expect from an OSC Audit, Logging and Tracking Grants, Conscious Leadership, Managers' Forum, Prevailing Wage / Bidding Procurement, Clerks' Forum, Capacity Building and Retention, and Records Management 101. Thank you, Committee Chairs Dustin Lewis and Kaitlyn Bemis, and all Districts, partners, and presenters involved! The 2– day event concluded with a history and geology-laden walking tour of Saratoga Spa State Park. Sights included the Hall of Springs, Roosevelt Baths and Spa, Geyser Island Spouter with tufa, and the Hayes Well Spring with an odor that clears your sinuses.







The Soil and Water Conservation Committee facilitated a fantastic and valuable Statewide Managers' Meeting in early December at Greek Peak, Cortland. Topics included SWCC strategic priorities, prevailing wages, break-out sessions, District operations, and an open discussion.









Photos by Rebecca Olsen, Conservation Technician, Genesee County Soil & Water Conservation District.



Beautiful fall colors in Genesee County Park.



Onions on the Muck!



Technician Tim measuring discharge at one of our water quality monitoring sites on Oak Orchard Creek!



Native Flowering seeds from our Tree & Shrub Program in my parent's garden bed! I think next year they'll plant them somewhere my mom can reach!

CDEA Wine and Pint Glass Tour

We all love our CDEA wine and pint glasses. Here they are in action across New York State. Cheers!

Niagara County SWCD Natural Resource Technician David Reckahn pictures working at the Marjim Manor wine outlet in the Falls this spring. Left: inside the wine shop, right: outside right on the street only a 5-10 minute walk from the falls.







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

Comradery Catch!
For the spirit of friendship and good

times with the family!

Jokers Wild

Northern Pike

Trout Special

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 <u>Google Forms</u> or <u>Fishcdea@gmail.com</u>:

- 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... <u>Jokers Wild</u> 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



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.



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

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.

Sincerely,

Blanche

Mrs. Blanche L. Hurlbutt, NYACD Executive Director





Save the Dates!!!

The NYACD and NACD NE Annual Event will be held on

Sunday, September 21st to Thursday, September 24th, 2025

At the

DoubleTree by Hilton Syracuse 6301 State Route 298 East Syracuse, New York

More information will be provided as the committee meets throughout the coming year. Any questions please contact Blanche L. Hurlbutt, NYACD Executive Director or any NYACD Board of Directors.

NRCS Update

Alana Covington, Assistant State Conservationist for Partnerships, Natural Resources Conservation Service

I am Dianna Stanton, the new Assistant State Conservationist for Field Operations for the Northeast Area. I have been with NRCS for 23 years. Over my career, I have worked in several positions and locations



throughout New York, including as Soil Conservationist, EQIP Program Manager and most recently District Conservationist for the Southeast Team 4. I grew up on a 200-cow dairy farm in Cortland County. My undergraduate years at Cornell University expanded my interests in soils, agriculture, technology, and the environment. I spent one year at Syracuse University's Maxwell School earning a Masters of Public Administration learning about government management and leadership. I'm excited to start the new position as ASTC-FO to be able to support the Northeast Area staff to get conservation on the ground. I live in Albany County with my husband Royal, my stepdaughter Kayla, my stepson Kameron, my 2 dogs Sasha and Bingo and my cat Sally.

For those of you who don't know me, I'd like to take a minute to introduce myself. My name is Jim LaGioia. I'm excited to be taking the reins as Assistant State Conservationist for Field Operations for the

West Area starting 12/15. As a teenager I spent my time working at a local dairy/crop farm. This is where I found my love for agriculture. After high school, I enrolled in Alfred State College with the intent of becoming an ECO for the DEC. After just one semester there, I realized that I hated being away from the farm and that I should pursue a career in Agriculture. After two years at Alfred, I transferred to Cornell University and finished my bachelors in Agricultural Science, followed by a master's in Crop and Soil Sciences. I was introduced to federal employment in 2006 through the Army Corps of Engineers under the Student Trainee Experience Program. I am closing in on 19 years of federal



service, including 5 years with USACE, and 13 with NRCS. I've served stints as a Soil Conservationist in Northeastern Utah, and in Wayne County, NY. Following that, I spent the next (almost) 10 years as the Resource Conservationist in beautiful Wyoming County. Most recently, I had the pleasure of serving in the West Area as Area Programs Specialist. I live on a little farm in Livingston County with my beautiful wife Lauren and our two kids, Elizabeth and Dominic. I spend my free time being dad and enjoying one of my many hobbies. I've been consistently impressed with the resiliency and work ethic that the employees here demonstrate. They always find a way to get it done. I am honored and humbled to serve in this position and excited to represent West Area.



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