

November 14, 2023

## MINUTES

### OSWEGO COUNTY SOIL AND WATER CONSERVATION DISTRICT DIRECTORS MEETING

The Directors and staff met in-person and by a virtual video conference call at the District Office Conference Room, located at 3105 State Route 3, Fulton, NY 13069 at 10:02am on Tuesday November 14<sup>th</sup>, 2023.

#### PRESENT:

Jeff Richards, Chairperson  
Linda Lockwood, Vice Chairperson  
Tom Bonoffski, Member  
Mary Ellen Chesbro, Member  
Sandy Tuori-Bell, Member

Joe Chairvolotti, District Manager  
Erica Schreiner, Sr. District Technician  
Laura Romanowicz, Secretary  
Ryan Cunningham, NYS SWCC  
Christa Carrington, Oswego County Attorney  
Rebecca Fowler, Guest

District Manager, Joe Chairvolotti, stated that the agenda would be adjusted to allow for Mrs. Becky Fowler of Maple Hollow Farm to address the Board. Mrs. Fowler wanted to inform the Board members of purported issues she has stated that they may have with the Heavy Use Area (HUA) Protection project that was facilitated by Oswego County Soil and Water Conservation District at her farm this year in Hannibal, which was cost-shared under the Agricultural Environmental Management (AEM) program. Joe introduced Becky Fowler and then the staff, board members and guests. After introductions, Mrs. Fowler addressed the Board regarding her project and the dissatisfaction she and her husband feel. The primary focus of her presentation revolved around her opinion that the project will not function properly and the pond on their property will become contaminated. Other concerns were also brought up regarding one of the contractors, including stress cracks that formed in the concrete, as well as a tree that was damaged and the process of obtaining quotes that was utilized as per AEM guidelines. The project has not been utilized to date.

After speaking, Mrs. Fowler provided Joe Chairvolotti a list of 6 items that represent her concerns regarding the project completed at Maple Hollow Farm. Mrs. Fowler was thanked by Chairman Richards for presenting to the board and then left the meeting.

**DIRECTOR RICHARDS MADE A MOTION TO ENTER INTO EXECUTIVE SESSION FOR DISCUSSIONS REGARDING PROPOSED, PENDING, OR CURRENT LITIGATION.**

**MOTION: TO ENTER INTO EXECUTIVE SESSION AT 10:24 AM.**

Director **Chesbro** made the motion, Seconded by Director **Lockwood**

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**MOTION: TO EXIT EXECUTIVE SESSION AT 11:29 AM.**

Director **Bonoffski** made the motion, Seconded by Director **Lockwood**

Ryan Cunningham, from NYS Agriculture and Markets will coordinate through the District for a meeting with the Fowlers at the farm to review the project, provide technical advice, and remind the property owners of utilization and maintenance requirements.

1. **MINUTES - MOTION: TO APPROVE MINUTES FOR October 2023 AS SUBMITTED.**

**5 yeas** (in favor), **0 nays** (those opposed)

Made by Director **Chesbro** and seconded by Director **Lockwood** and carried.

2. **ADMINISTRATIVE - MOTION: TO APPROVE THE BILLS FOR November 2023 AS SUBMITTED.**

**5 yeas** (in favor), **0 nays** (those opposed)

Made by Director **Chesbro** and seconded by Director **Lockwood** and carried.

**FINANCIAL REPORT - MOTION: TO APPROVE THE FINANCIAL REPORT FOR October 2023 AS SUBMITTED.**

**5 yeas** (in favor), **0 nays** (those opposed)

Made by Director **Bonoffski** and seconded by Director **Tuori-Bell** and carried.

**2023 MODIFIED BUDGET** - Board of Directors reviewed and approved the 2023 Modified Budget as submitted.

**PAYROLL CERTIFICATION FOR EMPLOYEES** - Board of Directors reviewed and approved the **November 2023** Payroll Certification for Employees as submitted.

**RECONCILED BANK STATEMENTS** - Director **Richards** reviewed the **October 2023** Reconciled Bank Statements and initialed.

**Old Business**

Budget: Provided a presentation to the EDP Committee. The topic of hiring additional staff due to workload was brought up during the committee meeting. The board was in favor of developing a plan to hire 1 staff person in approximately 1-year.

**New Business**

Nothing to report.

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## **REPORTS:**

**Ryan Cunningham submitted the following report:**

New York State Soil & Water Conservation Committee  
Region 4 Report - November 2023

Submitted by: Ryan Cunningham - Region 4 Associate Environmental Analyst

### **NYS SWCC News**

**New NYS Grants Management System Coming:** The SWCC wanted to make SWCDs aware that NYS is anticipated to launch a new integrated grants management system during the Month of January 2024. We expect to have more details on the transition to this new system in the coming weeks. The new system will effectively be replacing the grants gateway, and vendors (SWCD) that have registered in the old system to apply for grants will be rolled over to the new system automatically. At this time, we don't expect any changes in the application process for CRF or AGNPS. As we learn more about the new system, we will be sure to relay the information to SWCDs ASAP.

**November SWCC Meeting:** The next SWCC meeting is scheduled to convene at **10:00 AM on November 21<sup>st</sup>**. Further details and an agenda for this meeting will be sent out shortly. Reminder - participation at a SWCC meeting is eligible toward PM1, Part C of State Aid to Districts.

**2023 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.

**Reminder of Open Funding Opportunities:** A reminder that these funding programs are accepting rolling applications.

- **Source Water Buffer Program:** Funding is available to support the purchase of development rights on agricultural land to support the protection of active public drinking water sources. More information can be found here, <https://agriculture.ny.gov/soil-and-water/rfa-0181-source-water-buffer-program>
- **County Agriculture and Farmland Protection Planning Grants:** Counties are eligible for grants up to \$50,000 for developing a county agriculture and farmland protection plan. Any county that has established an agricultural and farmland protection board and has not had an agricultural and farmland protection plan approved in the last 10 years is eligible for funding. For more information and to assess your Counties eligibility, please visit: <https://agriculture.ny.gov/land-and-water/rfa-0262-county-agriculture-and-farmland-protection-planning-grants>

### **Other Events**

**2023 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 28<sup>th</sup>-29<sup>th</sup>**,

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2023, followed by a virtual track will commence on **December 12<sup>th</sup>-13<sup>th</sup>, 2023**, when additional programming will be offered. More information and a registration link can be found here, <https://www.nysaba.com/educational-meetings>

**NACD 2024 Annual Meeting:** Registration for The National Association of Conservation Districts' (NACD) 78<sup>th</sup> Annual Meeting is now open! Hosted in partnership with the California Association of Conservation Districts, the 2024 Annual Meeting will take place in San Diego, California, from **February 10<sup>th</sup> - 14<sup>th</sup>, 2024**. To learn more and to register, please visit: <https://www.nacdnet.org/news-and-events/annual-meeting/>

**Great Lakes Action Agenda Sub Basin Work Groups - Save the Dates:** NYSDEC has announced that dates and locations have been set for the Great Lakes Action Agenda Sub Basin Work group meetings. These work groups are being held in each of New York's Great Lakes Sub Basins to offer opportunities for stakeholders to learn, connect, and coordinate to support implementation of New York's Great Lakes Action Agenda, which was recently updated in 2023. Please let DEC know if you would like to attend in person or join remotely by emailing [greatlakes@dec.ny.gov](mailto:greatlakes@dec.ny.gov).

- Southeast Lake Ontario: Wednesday, **11/29/23, 1:00 - 4:00pm** - McCrobie Civic Center, 21 Lake St. Oswego, NY
- Northeast Lake Ontario-St. Lawrence River: Thursday, **11/30/23, 1:00 - 4:00pm** - Massena Town Hall, Massena, NY
- Lake Erie: Monday, **12/4/23, 1:00 - 4:00pm** - Tiffit Nature Preserve 1200 Fuhrmann Boulevard, Buffalo, NY
- Southwest Lake Ontario: Tuesday, **12/5/23, 1:00 - 4:00pm** - Seymour Library, 161 East Ave. Brockport, NY

### **Other Funding**

**Urban Farms and Community Gardens Grant Program** - NYSAGM invites eligible organizations to apply for funding through the Urban Farms and Community Gardens Grant Program. Funding is available to support the development and expansion of community gardens, school gardens, and urban farms across the state. **The deadline for applications is December 1<sup>st</sup>, 2023 (4PM)**. The program website supplies the RFP, FAQ, and an informational webinar recording (<https://agriculture.ny.gov/rfp-0318-urban-farms-and-community-gardens-grant-program>).

**NOAA Transformational Habitat Restoration and Coastal Resilience Grant:** NOAA recently announced that they will provide nearly \$240M to prioritized high-value, high-impact habitat restoration projects that advance resilience. The competition closes **November 17th**. For more information and to apply, visit, <https://www.fisheries.noaa.gov/feature-story/240-million-available-transformational-habitat-restoration-and-coastal-resilience>

**DEC Urban and Community Forestry Funding Available:** NYSDEC is accepting applications for a total of \$12.9 million for urban and community forestry projects through the Inflation Reduction Act funding opportunity. Applicants may apply for funding under two categories, Community Forest

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Management Plan Implementation (\$10 million) and Ash Tree Management (\$2.9 million). The maximum request is \$500,000 per application and no match is required. All projects must take place in disadvantaged communities as identified by any of three Federal and State tools listed in the Request for Applications (RFA). The deadline to submit applications is **Wednesday, Jan. 31, 2024**. DEC's Urban and Community Forestry program is holding a virtual information session on **Wednesday, Nov. 15<sup>th</sup>**, from 10 a.m. to 12 p.m. to provide more information. The RFA can be found here:

[https://www.dec.ny.gov/lands/5285.html#Inflation\\_Reduction](https://www.dec.ny.gov/lands/5285.html#Inflation_Reduction). Register here:

<https://meetny.webex.com/webappng/sites/meetny/meeting/register/e9d8613039a14fac9460fd9ea65c74ca?ticket=4832534b0000000684ded2171befed1f26676dae10067ec1d683ebd24a06e2f60e6ae4650bc148bc&timestamp=1699014406078&RGID=raf052a25587ecb5b719641845d549d1>

**Erica Schreiner gave the following report:**

Submitted the AEM Round 18 Action Plan to Albany and received confirmation it has been accepted. Round 18 will cover 2024 and 2025.

Attended landowner meetings and completed tasks related to a farm project.

An AEM implementation project is about 75% complete and is expected to be finished this month. A significant amount of time has been spent in the field for the project.

Continued AEM planning with additional program participants. Several farm visits are scheduled for later this month and December.

Followed up with an agricultural landowner who would like to install tile drainage at his Christmas tree farm. A design was created and discussed with the landowner

Maintained the District web site and Facebook page.

Provided customer technical assistance in the following areas: ag assessment vs. ag district, drainage concerns, general property questions, and well water testing.

Ag value assessment program requirement questions have started to increase. Landowners have been given the necessary information and informed that the processing of soil group worksheets and maps will begin after the first of the year.

Prepared soils information for a meeting at CiTi in regard to a garden CiTi instructors may want to install on the property to be used by their ag class. The meeting is in conjunction with Cornell Cooperative Extension of Oswego County.



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Began planning the 2024 Oswego County Envirothon which will be held on May 2.

Assisted JC with timber marking.

**Laura Romanowicz gave the following report:**

Have been working with Joe to prepare the close-out documents for FLOWPA 20/21.

Performance Measures: The regional/state meeting performance measure requirement has now been fulfilled. Thank you to all Directors, and great work attending these meetings for 2023.

Attended several training sessions, which include part 1 & 2 Cyber Security webinars, the NYACD Annual Conference in Penn Yan, and the Administrative Conference.

Dunk kits: Received a phone call from the Oswego County Health Department regarding obtaining mosquito dunk kits from the state. There is an abundance of kits available that the state is providing to counties, free of charge, and the health department was interested if we wanted split a large quantity with them. They are waiting for a survey to be released and will let us know what amount the state approves them to receive.

**Joe Chairvolotti gave the following report:**

Reforestation Property:

Finished marking the 2024 timber sale, but still need to complete the layout (skid trails, landing, etc). Will be working with Oswego County Purchasing to send out a bid notice soon.

Assisted landowners and municipalities with general technical, water quality and forestry related advice, both remotely and on-site. Requests involving regulatory feature, logging near regulated areas and drainage.

Marked TSI on approximately 4 acres for the CSP program with the intent of rehabilitating a cut-over northern hardwoods.

Communications regarding Regenerate NY. We will be working on uploading applications and the associated tasks over the winter for a spring deadline.

Attended 1 SWCC staff meeting and have also provided information as needed to offer assistance in developing a suite of forestry practices to be added to the CRF grant program.

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NYACD Forestry Course: Developed a power point and provided a presentation to approximately 25 participants at the NYACD annual meeting. The course focused on starting a District forestry program.

Village of Pulaski Drainage Grant: Have had some communications with the Village of Pulaski and started the bid to secure an engineer for the stormwater study and designs. May need to put the project bid on hold until mid-winter to allow the contractor to take advantage of the field season for planning work.

Lake Neatahwanta: Communications with various members of the committee pursuing the services of the EutroPHIX company as a solution to the algal problem in Lake Neatahwanta. I developed several questions and sent them to the company and cc'd the committee. I was told that the City of Fulton would handle funds associated with the project, rather than Soil and Water. The DEC still has not provided approval of this type of treatment. General discussion followed.

Oneida Lake 9 E Plan: Participated in the Oneida Lake 9 E Plan meeting regarding BMP suggestions for the modeling aspect of the plan. Sarra participated in another meeting regarding this plan and we will continue to offer assistance as needed.

Sandy Creeks 9 E Plan: The dataset from sampling is almost complete, but one more round will be required that coincides with a rain event. Jefferson County will handle this obligation as they will need to mobilize quickly.

FOLLOWPA:

submitted a modification of the 20/21 contract to include water quality monitoring for the Sandy Creeks 9 E Plan

submitted a work plan for the 2023/2024 FOLLOWPA contract

began developing a final report for the FOLLOWPA 20/21 contract, but we're still waiting for the modification approval

Water Chestnut Herbicide Treatment:

Submitted a QAPP report for the water sampling aspect of our water chestnut program and received approval.

Met with the Canal Corp regarding the submission of DEC permits and at this point, they will not supply a letter of authorization. Alternatively, the Corp will be signing the wetland permits needed for hand-pulling and/or herbicide treatment. It is still undecided how we will be handling the Pesticide applications.

Provided input on the potential herbicide program in Onondaga County

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Mexico Trail Riders: Designed a stream crossing for the snowmobile trail off from Valley Road, met with landowner for sign-off and submitted an application for a DEC wetland permit. Met with DEC and ACOE to clarify the project and it will not be allowed to move forward until a site visit can take place in the spring of 2024. The club may be allowed to use timber mats temporarily, so this office completed a design to be provided to the DEC. This is an amendment to the original permit. General discussion followed.

Town of Williamstown NOIA: Worked on amending the design for the Kasoag Lake culvert and adding the requested information. This will be submitted soon.

HWA at Independence Park: Assisted the Hemlock Initiative with the release of over 1,500 *laricobious* beetles at Independence Park to prey on the HWA.

Provided assistance for one particular project under the AEM program.

Developed a letter of support for the Kasoag Lake's application for 2 invasive species grants to facilitate remediation work.

Deer Creek Marsh: Notified DEC that this project would not occur until next year due to workload and the diminishing window of time left in the field season.

Office closure on Tuesday, December 26:

**MOTION: TO CLOSE THE DISTRICT OFFICE ON TUESDAY DECEMBER 26, 2023, AND STAFF WILL BE EXPECTED TO USE THEIR OWN LEAVE TIME.**

**5 yeas** (in favor), **0 nays** (those opposed)

Made by Director **Lockwood** and seconded by Director **Tuori-Bell** and carried.

3. **NEXT MEETING** - Tuesday December 12<sup>th</sup>, 2023 @ 10:00am at the District's Conference Room

4. **ADJOURNMENT** - Meeting adjourned at 12:10pm.

**MOTION: TO ADJOURN**

Made by Director **Bonoffski** and seconded by Director **Lockwood** and carried.



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Respectively submitted,

Laura Romanowicz

cc: Directors

NRCS/Area Office

Ryan Cunningham/NYSSWCC

FSA & NRCS/Oswego Field Office

Betsy Sherman-Saunders/Clerk of the Legislature

Raven Ahart/Deputy Clerk of the Legislature

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