

2017 ANNUAL REPORT

Onondaga County Soil and Water Conservation District



"Promoting excellence in the wise use of our rural and urban natural resources."

A MESSAGE FROM OUR EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR



A Year To Come Together

2017 will be remembered for the flooding and wet weather. On February 24, the temperature in the Syracuse area hit 71 degrees Fahrenheit. On March 13 and 14 a Nor'easter moved up the east coast and spread up to 3 feet of snow in one storm (equivalent to the entire amount of snow that fell during the 2015/2016 snow season.) Then, excessive spring rains in May and June caused Lake

Ontario levels to rise three feet above normal. This was occurring just as new environmental regulations were codified to help farmers address wet weather management of manure nutrients. Between July and September the southern portion of Onondaga County saw twice as much rainfall as normal. Just as it seemed the wet weather and damage/destruction would not end, our region experienced one of the nicest/warmest falls on record between the beginning of September and the end of October. Over 70 percent of the days had above normal temperatures. The hottest days were on Sept. 26 and 27 when we reached a record temperature of 91 degrees. That is when the five "perfect storm" conditions created the first documented Harmful Algal Bloom (HAB) on Skaneateles Lake in decades!

All this crazy weather and changes to environmental regulations brought people together. People helped one another in their times of need during the flooding. People that often times never gave any thought to or discussed the environment and our clean drinking water supplies, talked about water quality a lot. People and organizations that had not always agreed did agree that our drinking water supplies, via the HAB, just "fired a shot across our bow" warning us to all stand up and take action to protect our drinking water supplies from another HAB. People demonstrated that they craved to be more educated about what was happening and wanted to learn more about what they could do to help make a difference. People no longer were taking clean, safe drinking water for granted. They met in the middle, agreed to disagree, and began working towards the common goal of water quality, realizing that it affects us all.

It is important to continue to build on this momentum of working together for water quality; to be thankful for what has been done to protect water quality, to recognize those efforts whenever we can with a "Thank You". Let's continue to work together for a brighter future, a safer environment, and clean water. And, we do it TOGETHER again in 2018!

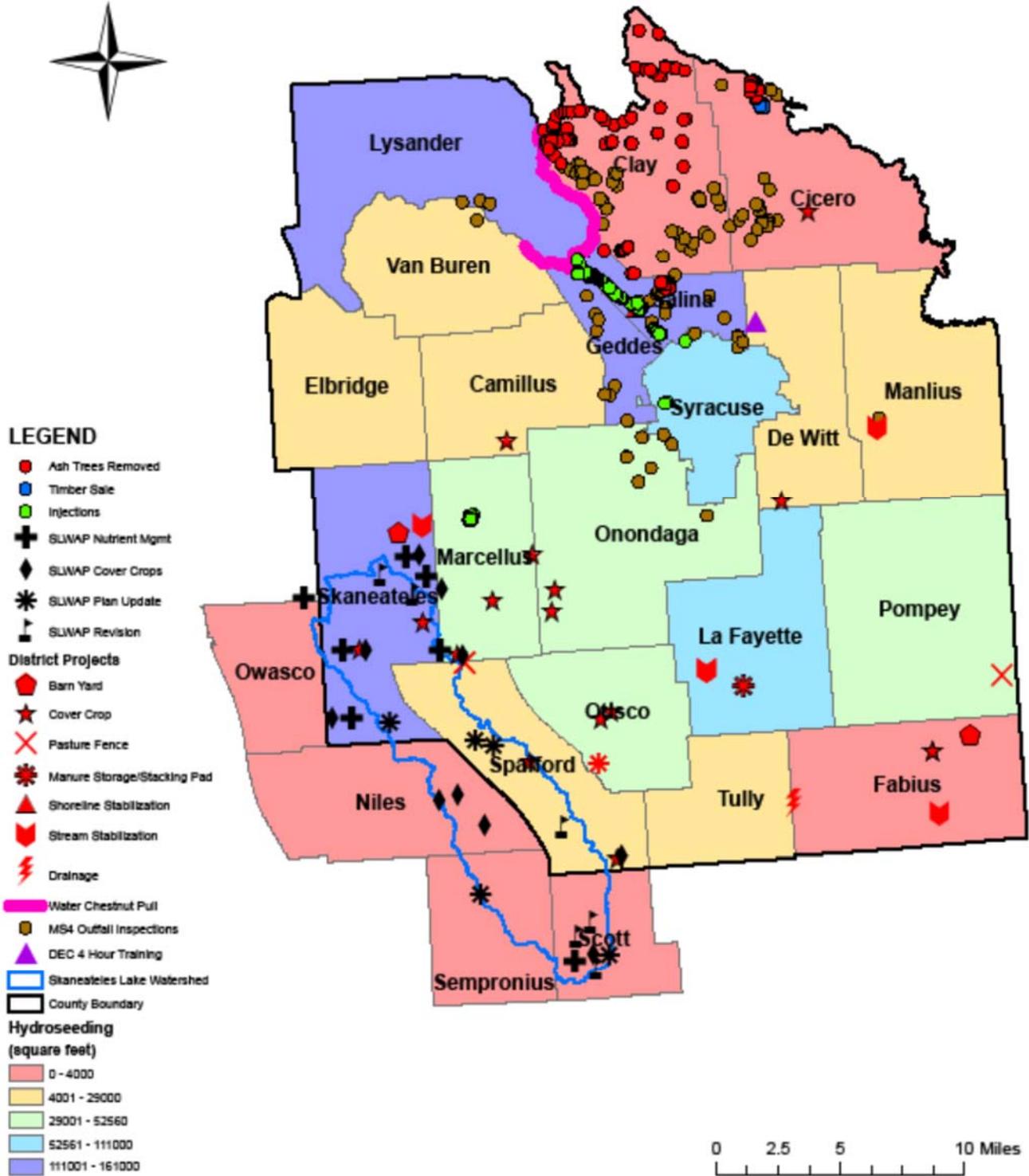
Mark

Mark E. Burger
Executive Director

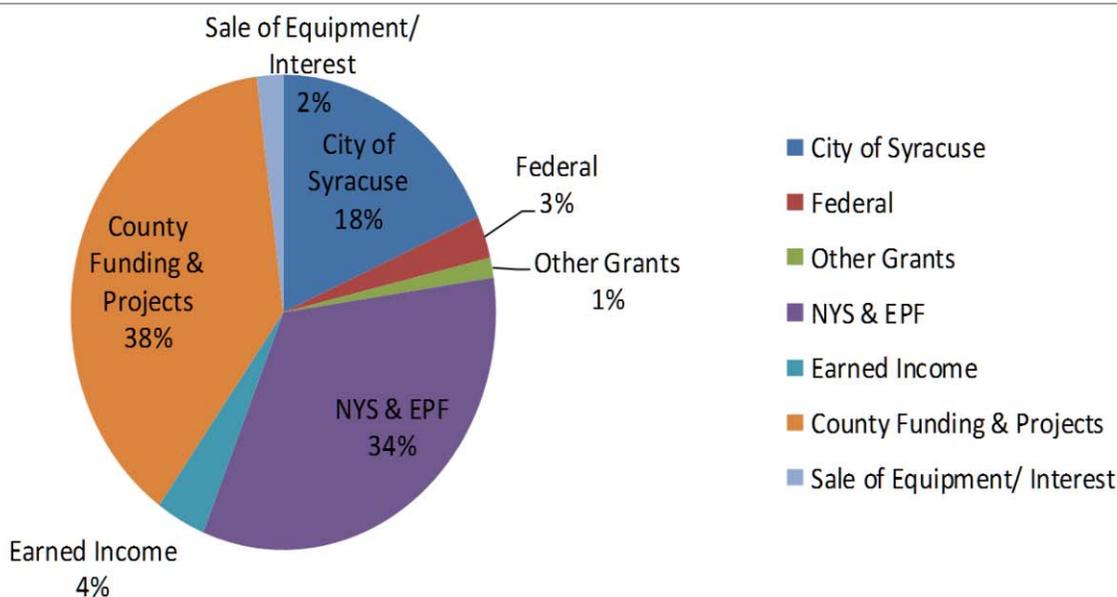
A YEAR OF STORMS



2017 Summary of Project Activity in Onondaga County and the Skaneateles Lake Watershed



2017 YEAR IN REVIEW



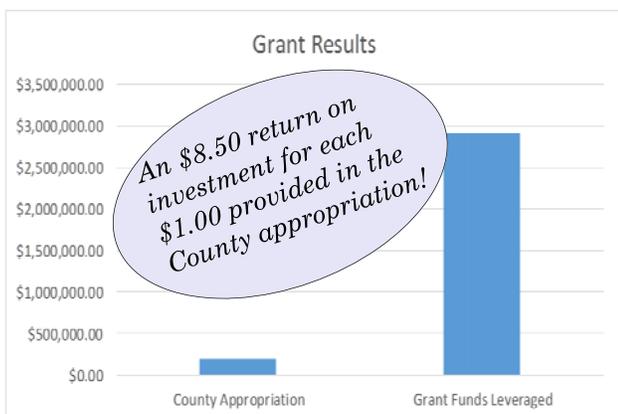
District staff authored 17 grant applications to the NYS Department of Agriculture and Markets, and the NYS Department of Environmental Conservation. Fourteen grants were secured for a total of \$2.9 million. This will allow the District to implement 93 Best Management Practices on 24 farms to help address non-point sources of pollution using the Agricultural Environmental Management Plan.



A total of 3,177.2 acres of cover crops were planted on farm fields in Onondaga County. A farmer has stated that this is the best money that can be spent in the watersheds, our "Green Infrastructure" for agriculture.

AEM SUMMARY 2017

AEM TIERED STRUCTURE - # COMPLETED	
Tier 1 - Sign-up/Enrollments	5
Tier 2 - Questionnaire/survey of water quality concerns on the farm	7
Tier 3A - Simple conservation plan	5
Tier 3B - Detailed conservation plan	1
Tier 4 - Implementation of plan	2
Tier 5A - Revision to tier 2	2
Tier 5B - Revision to tier 3A	11



TYPES/# OF FARMS ASSISTED	
Beef	14
Dairy	9
Cash Grains	3
Horses	3
Vegetables	3
Orchards	1

Acres of grazing **266.8**

District BMP Summary 2017

Best Management Practice System	# Landowners Assisted	Goals/Objectives of Projects	Total Cost	Units Implemented
Access Control System	1	stream crossing	\$795.60	1
	1	Access Rd / Lane-way	\$14,316.00	350 LF
TOTAL			\$15,111.60	
Livestock HUA Runoff Management	1	Roofwater / Dripline w/ Under-ground Outlet	\$8,126.00	644 LF
	2	Barnyards	\$81,937.44	4,978 SF
TOTAL			\$90,063.44	
Prescribed Rotational Grazing	1	Exclusion Fence	\$7,867.30	2,700 FT
	1	Alternative Water Supply	\$500.00	1 trough
	2	Waterlines	\$9,516.85	3,340 LF
TOTAL			\$17,884.15	
Soil Conservation System - Cultural	19	Fall Cover Crops on Corn Silage Ground	\$57,206.41	1932.8 AC
Stream Corridor & Shoreline Management				
• Apple Fest	1	Repair to project done in 2016 on Onondaga Crk	\$1,900.00	100 LF
• V. Fayetteville (Limestone Crk)	1	Gravel Bar Removal	\$13,185.32	473 LF
• OEC Dogwood Plantings @ OLP	1	Shoreline Stabilization w/ Woody Plantings	\$1,898.21	880 Red Osier Dogwood whips
• Owasco Cemetary / Dutch Hollow Brook	2	Purchase materials/ supplies for 2018 installation	\$11,572.50	
TOTAL			\$28,556.03	
Manure Nutrient Storage & Transfer	4	Manure Storage	\$357,292.05	
OTHER: Design Cost Share	1	design	\$2,190.00	

SLWAP BMP Summary 2017

Best Management Practice System	# Landowners Assisted	Goals/Objectives of Project	Total Cost	Units Implemented
Access Control System				
	1	Culvert Crossing	\$8,358.00	40 LF
	1	Access Road	\$14,108.00	900 LF
TOTAL			\$22,466.00	940 LF
Erosion & Sediment Control - Structural				
	2	Sub-Surface Drainage	\$10,800.00	2450 LF
	1	Diversion	\$2,500.00	500 LF
TOTAL			\$13,300.00	2950 LF
Nutrient Management System - Cultural				
	4	Nutrient Management Recommendations	\$8,000.00	3089 AC
	2	Soil Samples for Fertilizer Recommendations	\$1,114.00	55 Samples
Soil Conservation System - Cultural				
	10	Fall Cover Cropping of Corn Silage Fields	\$49,089.27	1244.4 AC
	1	Riparian Herbaceous Cover-Buffer's	\$1,200.00	1028 LF
TOTAL				
Stream Corridor & Shoreline Management				
	1	Culvert Repair	\$850.00	20 LF
	1	Stream Blowout	\$8,672.00	605 LF
	1	Clogged Culvert	\$3,000.00	40 LF
	2	Stream Bank Stabilization	\$15,430.00	452 LF

2017 YEAR IN REVIEW

SPECIAL PROJECT - Friday October 20 was a challenging day packed with its own rewards. Many people came together, including volunteers, to install four 12-inch plastic culvert pipes through a beaver dam on Heron Marsh in the Town of Cicero, NY. The goal was to lower the water levels that were causing flooding and damage on private property, while also protecting the beaver and their habitat. It was a warm fall day with a sighting of a bald eagle who was accompanied by a Cooper's hawk.

The dam was approximately 2-3 feet high and less than 20 feet long. There was a little issue submerging the upstream end of the pipes, but it was eventually sunk. A suggestion given by a volunteer was, instead of installing four 20-foot-long, 12-inch pipes (2 side by side), use two 20-foot-long, 12-inch pipes side by side. The upstream 10-foot section should be perforated. By cutting the materials in half on smaller dams, the costs for these projects would also be reduced accordingly. This would also likely cut the installation time in half.



EARTH DAY



About 30 volunteers helped to plant 15 trees along a section of Oneida Shores County Park on April 22nd.



Every year District staff celebrates Earth Day with an annual trash pickup at their office facility on County park property. 2017 marks the 5th year of participating at this site. 7

2017 YEAR IN REVIEW

CRITICAL AREA SEEDING

The hydro seeding program revegetated a total of 43 miles of road ditch stabilization in 9 municipalities, and 40 acres of seeding projects. Major projects for 2017 include:

- Metro plant on Hiawatha Blvd.
- Town of Clay Park
- Onondaga Lake Park
- Lakeview Ampitheater



Town of Clay Park, seeded during the fall of 2017 after construction.

STORMWATER INSPECTION PROGRAM

Onondaga County Soil & Water Conservation District (SWCD) staff continued to be involved in the County Stormwater Program throughout 2017. Staff members inspected the Lakeview Amphitheater site a total of 48 times in 2017, and we inspected 8 other County projects throughout the year a total of 50 times for a total of 98 inspections. Our goal was to provide strong water quality support to the County for all their construction projects, and to help get these projects closer to the Notice of Termination stage. District staff members continued to provide Stormwater outfall inspections for the final year of a five-year cycle program. Objective was to locate-inspect-update outfalls throughout the county. We will start the cycle over again in 2018, continuing to update the outfall conditions and concerns while looking for evidence of illicit discharges. District staff also helped the County by preparing for submission the County Annual Stormwater and Semi Annual Stormwater Reports to NYS DEC that were completed in May and November respectively.



One of several stormwater outlets at the Lakeview Ampitheater site.

“It is our vision to live in a society in which future generations will have natural resources necessary to sustain and enrich their quality of life.”

2017 YEAR IN REVIEW

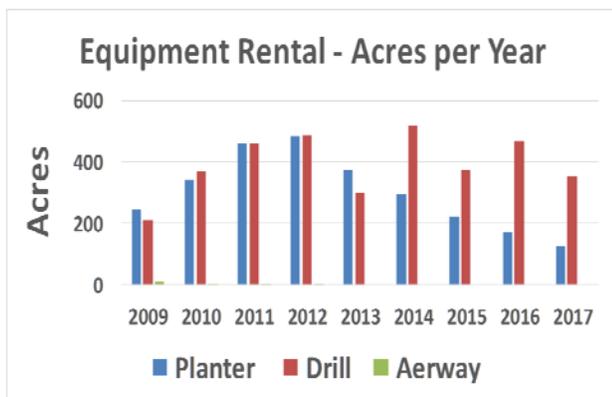
AGRICULTURAL ASSESSMENT

The District produced 84 soil group worksheets in 2017 for landowners of agricultural land. Total acreage assessed was 2,427 acres.

The program was established under Agricultural District law to provide a means of preserving farmland, designed to provide a partial exemption from taxation for farmland where pressures from competing land uses cause the market value of the land, and in turn, the assessment, to exceed the economic value of the land.

CONSERVATION TILLAGE

The Ag equipment rental program has made no-till technology available to farms in the watershed and around Onondaga County for the past 9 seasons because of exclusive financial support from the City of Syracuse. In order to upgrade our equipment, it was decided to sell both the 6-row John Deere 1750 conservation planter and the 10-foot Great Plains 1006 no-till drill. A new 12-foot no-till drill was purchased with the sales proceeds. The new Esch 5512 no-till drill is available @ \$11/acre on a first come/first served basis to qualified farmers with a minimum 100hp tractor with 2 pairs of hydraulic connections.



WATER CHESTNUT PROJECT

This summer OCSWCD sent out a crew of 4 college students to hand pull in the Seneca, Oneida, and Oswego Rivers. After 6 weeks, the crew hand pulled a total of 19 miles and collected approximately

13,770 pounds of water chestnut plants; about 720 lbs./mi.

The plants and seeds removed from the Seneca River were taken to the

OCRRA site in Camillus for composting. Funding for this important project was provided through an Aquatic Nuisance Species Grant received by the Onondaga County Health Department, Division of Environmental Health under the direction of Dr. Russell Nemecek.



In 2017, a total of 251 acres were drilled on farms using the new Esch. This number represents usage from August through November.

2017 YEAR IN REVIEW

ASH TREE MANAGEMENT In 2017, the District continued to implement the Onondaga County Ash Tree Management Strategy in response to the presence of Emerald Ash Borer, an invasive insect that kills ash trees. Over the course of the year, the District oversaw the removal of 4,176 ash trees from County property. Trees were removed from County highway right-of-ways in the Towns of Clay, Salina, Geddes, and Onondaga as well as in Hopkins Road and Oneida Shores County Parks. As of the end of 2017, a total of 6,913 trees have been removed since the project began in 2014.

While planning out the ash tree removals at Oneida Shores County Park, the District identified a stand of ash in the park that held many potential saw logs and was in an area of the park that does not see a lot of patron traffic. The District is pleased to report having successfully sold 187 County ash trees totaling approximately 32,250 Board Feet for timber.

Utilizing a systemic insecticide to protect trees from the effects of Emerald Ash Borer, the District treated a total of 207 ash trees (5,101 diameter inches) for Onondaga County. Trees were located in Onondaga Lake Park, the Rosamond Gifford Zoo, and NBT Stadium. In addition to trees that were treated for Onondaga County, the District also treated 34 ash trees (850 diameter inches) for the Town of Marcellus in an ongoing partnership. All trees are on a two-year treatment cycle and most of the trees treated in 2017 had been previously treated in 2015.

In the spring and fall of 2017, the District oversaw the planting of 726 trees. Most of these trees were planted at Oneida Shores County Park through a partnership with Onondaga Earth Corps (OEC), a non-profit working to provide job readiness training to at-risk youth and young adults, with grant funding from the United States Forest Service. In step with OEC's mission, two community tree planting events were also hosted at Oneida Shores County Park, including one on Earth Day. The remaining trees were planted in Onondaga Lake Park with grant funds from the New York State Department of Environmental Conservation.

In addition to these projects, the District has an ISA Certified Arborist on staff who has provided technical assistance and tree health/risk assessments to the County Parks Department and two County residents.

TIMBER SALE - The Onondaga County Ash Tree Management Strategy, which is being implemented by the District on behalf of the County, has made its first timber sale. While planning out another phase of ash tree removals at Oneida Shores County Park, the District identified a stand of ash in the park that held many potential saw logs and was in an area of the park that does not see a lot of patron traffic. The District reports that about 187 County ash trees totaling about 32,250 Board Feet, have been sold for saw logs.



Ash logs cut by Tomaino Logging were marked and loaded onto a log truck for the District's first timber sale as part of the County's Ash Tree Management Strategy.



Ash logs are marked for the District's first timber sale.

EDUCATION & OUTREACH

CNY REGIONAL ENVIROTHON

County Soil and Water Conservation Districts across New York State organize a local Envirothon for high school students with an interest in environmental studies. The Envirothon is a fun, outdoor, academic event for high school students, an exciting program that has attracted wide community involvement and grown rapidly in every state where it has been introduced. It challenges students to think critically about the natural world, to recognize their role, and how they impact it. Today's students will be tomorrow's scientists, property owners, government officials, parents and teachers.



Teams compete at the Aquatics station.

SNOW & ICE CONTROL - Fifty municipal highway department personnel attended a Snow & Ice Control Workshop at the NYS Fairgrounds on Tuesday, November 21. Amongst those numbers, 17 trucks were calibrated from 10 municipalities around Central New York. The workshop consisted of a "Train-the-trainer" on-site spreader calibration by the NYS Department of Transportation personnel on all the municipal trucks that were brought in on event day. Following calibrations, DOT personnel gave presentations that further strengthened the argument that calibrating spreader equipment is very important. Proper calibration of salt spreader trucks results in cost saving opportunities for towns and villages through using only the necessary amount of salt to make the roads safe for driving. Also, when a municipality is spreading the correct amount of salt they are minimizing their environmental impact while assuring the roads are safe

Financial and technical support for the event was provided by: NYS Fairgrounds, NYS Department of Transportation, CNY Regional Planning and Development Board and the Onondaga County Soil & Water Conservation District. We would specifically like to thank the following groups for bringing trucks in for calibration on event day: Village of Baldwinsville, Cayuga County, Town of DeWitt, Village of East Syracuse, Town of LaFayette, Village of Manlius, Village of North Syracuse, Onondaga County, Town of Van Buren, and Town of Palermo.



One by one, trucks pull up for proper salt calibration.

EDUCATION & OUTREACH

EROSION & SEDIMENT CONTROL CLASS

In 2017, twelve 4 hour NYS DEC Erosion & Sediment Control training courses were provided by the District to a total of 272 participants.

The objective of this certification program is to establish and maintain a process to identify and recognize individuals who are capable of developing, designing, inspecting and maintaining erosion and sediment control plans on projects that disturb soils in New York State. The development and oversight of these plans will be executed in accordance with the New York State Standards and Specifications for Erosion and Sediment Control and the New York State General Permit for Stormwater Discharges from Construction Activities.



Program Manager Doug Fisher teaching Erosion & Sediment Control class.

ANNUAL TREE & SHRUB PROGRAM

A total of 5,527 trees and shrubs were sold to residents across the county, along with 77 conservation pacs, and 22 bluebird and bat houses. The houses were built by a the Tully High School Industrial Arts class. The annual spring sale has been a successful outreach program since 1976! The District has been well received by the public and considers this event a great instrument for the public at large to “get to know us”.



Rebecca Weber, District Conservation Technician is seen here preparing to “gel” the roots for packaging.

NEXT GENERATION

On April 20, fifteen people gathered at Twin Birch Farm in Skaneateles to learn why and how the Skaneateles Lake Watershed Agricultural Program (SLWAP) was formed in 1994. The main goal of the meeting was to educate the sons and daughters of the cooperating farmers in the watershed, i.e. the “Next Generation”, about what went into getting the SLWAP off the ground between 1992 and 1994. The Next Generation also learned why it is still important today to keep the program going to maintain the filtration avoidance waiver for the City of Syracuse.

Attendees were reminded that participation in the program is still voluntary and they were shown multiple examples of what can be accomplished when we all work together towards a common goal of water quality. It is exciting that some farms that have never had representation on the Watershed Agricultural Program Review Committee (WAPRC) may have employees in leadership roles on the WAPRC in the future!



Dirk Young addresses the audience at his shop, sharing his experience of working with the Skaneateles Lake Watershed Agricultural program.

AWARDS, HONORS & SPECIAL EVENTS

FARM OF THE YEAR

Pompey Hollow Angus, LLC, Sherry and Jeff Barber win “Farm of the Year” award. Over 20 years ago, the farm had a portion of the property put into an easement to keep it forever wild. This enhances wildlife habitat and maintains riparian buffers. The sound practices the Barbers have implemented, plus their continued commitment to sustainability and good land stewardship practices earned them this award.



County Legislator David Knapp stands with Sherry and Jeff Barber as they receive the award.

MUNICIPAL PARTNER AWARD



Onondaga County Soil & Water Conservation District Program Manager presented the District’s Municipal Partner of the Year Plaque to Gene Dinsmore, Superintendent and Cindy Rahrle, Clerk at the Town of Lysander Highway Garage. This award is an annual recognition that the District Board of Directors selects during their November monthly meeting. Onondaga County SWCD is proud of the partnership that we have had with the Town of Lysander, and all of the municipalities that we have worked with in 2017.

LEGISLATIVE DAYS AT THE CAPITOL

Every year, the District sends staff and Board members to Albany to join other Districts for Legislative Days. They introduce themselves and discuss current conservation topics or concerns, and inform their elected officials of the District’s programs and activities for the current year.

In 2017, Eric Jensen and Eric Renfer, both District Resource Conservation Specialists, met with New York State Assembly members.



Eric Renfer and Eric Jensen stand with Assemblyman William Magnarelli in his Albany office.

Board of Directors

F. Spencer Givens	Chair - At-Large Rep.
Craig Dennis	Vice Chair - At-Large Practical Farming
Wayne Norris	Treasurer - Grange Rep.
John Lemondes	Farm Bureau Rep.
David Coburn	At-Large Non-ag
David H. Knapp	County Legislator
Derek Shepard, Jr.	County Legislator

District Staff

Mark Burger	Executive Director
Doug Fisher	Program Manager
Gwyn Olenych	Account Clerk III
Maggie Connelly	Administrative Assistant
Nick Bobbett	Seasonal Aide
Aaron Buchta	Resource Conservation Specialist
Eric Renfer	Resource Conservation Specialist
Eva Brown	Resource Conservation Specialist
Rebecca Weber	District Conservation Technician
Ron May	District Conservation Technician

Skaneateles Lake Watershed Agricultural Program

Watershed Agricultural Program Review Committee

Mike McMahon	Chair - Cortland County
Steve Nemece	Vice Chair - Cayuga County
Gaelen Head	Cayuga County
Eric Brayman	Onondaga County
Craig Richards	Onondaga County
Ed Tidd	Onondaga County
David Perry	Cortland County
Rich Abbott	City of Syracuse
Dale Kehoe	Advisory Member
Jim Greenfield	Advisory Member

SLWAP Staff

Mark Burger	Program Manager
Eric Jensen	Resource Conservation Specialist
Kim Clark	District Conservation Technician

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The Onondaga County Soil & Water Conservation District was chartered on March 6, 1944 as one of 58 special purpose Districts in New York State, one in each county including the five boroughs of New York City. Each District is governed by a Board of Directors who set program policy to be implemented by the District staff.

All programs and services are offered on a nondiscriminatory basis without regard to race, color, national origin, gender, religion, age, disability, political beliefs, sexual orientation, and marital or familial status.