

CONSERVATION QUARTERLY

Onondaga County Soil & Water Conservation District



2019 CNY REGIONAL ENVIROTHON HIGHLIGHTS

By Maggie Connelly, Secretary

And the Winner is

“Gang-Green”, a team from Skaneateles High School wins First Place at the Central New York Regional Envirothon. The team will travel to Hobart and William Smith Colleges, Geneva NY to compete in the New York State Envirothon May 22nd and 23rd. They will be among 50 or more other winners from New York State high schools to compete for the state award and college scholarships. If “Gang-Green” wins the state championship, the students will move onto the North American Envirothon July 28th – August 2nd at North Carolina State University in Raleigh, NC.

Every year the Envirothon, starting at the local level, provides an event to supplement environmental education both inside and outside the classroom. Each team consists of five students and is led by a volunteer advisor. Each team works collaboratively to develop their knowledge of ecology and natural resource management.

The Envirothon is organized by Soil and Water Conservation Districts and the event is sponsored by several generous donations from area businesses.



(l-r) “Gang-Green” team members from Skaneateles High School, Eva Vitsaxaki, Matheu Campbell, Mila Miller, Nick Paciorek, Kelsey Ibach. Photo courtesy of Roland Ivers, District Volunteer.

Covanta Donates \$5,000

Kathleen Carroll, Covanta’s Business Manager and her staff present a \$5,000 donation to the CNY Regional Envirothon. Since 1998, Covanta has been instrumental in sustaining a rigorous, hands-on environmental program in Central New York schools. “Covanta is pleased to continue its long-term partnership with the Central NY Regional Envirothon. We are proud to volunteer and assist in funding of student scholarships for this amazing outdoor environmental competition with area high school students.”, said Ms. Carroll. The educational program was established in Onondaga County in 1991 and the hope is to continue investing in the youth to make well educated choices as future leaders, consumers, and decision makers.

Covanta is an energy from waste facility and occupies 12 acres in Jamesville, NY. Covanta believes that recovering energy from the waste that remains after recycling is an important part of sustainable waste management and a key to reducing the hundreds of millions of tons of waste sent to landfills each year. Energy-from-Waste takes non-hazardous waste destined for landfills, combusts it in specially designed boilers then recovers the heat to generate steam to use in energy generation or other industrial processes.



Covanta personnel and the CNY Regional Envirothon Committee prepare to launch this year’s competition.

“Promoting excellence in the wise use of our urban/suburban natural resources.”

ATTENTION

Contractors Hired by Onondaga County Soil & Water Conservation District

By Ron May, Conservation District Technician



In accordance with Senate Bill S.6756 and Assembly Bill 9985 signed by Governor Andrew Cuomo on November 5, 2018: Excavators that work for a local govern-

ment and their hired contractors, as well as excavators that work for an operator and their hired contractors must now complete **Dig Safely New York's Certified Excavator Program in Safe Digging Best Practices Course**. Local in-person course availability (\$25 Fee):

For more information on these, and other upcoming in-person courses available, please visit, <https://www.digsafelynewyork.com/cep/available-cep-classes>

*For excavators who are unable or would prefer not to attend the in-person course, there is an online course for **Dig Safely New York's Certified Excavator Program** that is always available. It meets the same requirements as the in-person course and there is a \$25 fee for this version of the course as well. Go to <https://www.digsafelynewyork.com/online-certification>



* A spill is considered to have not impacted land if it occurs on a paved surface such as asphalt or concrete. A spill in a dirt or gravel parking lot is considered to have impacted land and is reportable.

AMERICAN PUBLIC WORKS ASSOCIATION STATE AWARD



Mark Burger receives award.

Mark Burger was presented the New York State award from the American Public Works Association at their annual banquet on March 21st in Utica. Mark also won the Central New York Chapter APWA award in November.

The Professional Manager of the Year Award in Water Resources recognizes

outstanding achievements in the area of water resources and the recipient's ability to inspire excellence, leadership, and dedication to the public good. Mark far exceeded the criteria for this award in his application of leadership, innovation, customer service and community service. The nomination was submitted by the Onondaga County Water Authority, Congratulations Mark!

PETROLEUM SPILLS WHAT YOU NEED TO KNOW

*An excerpt from Jo-Anne Humphreys
Water Quality Specialist, Nature Conservancy of Central & Western
New York*

All petroleum spills that occur within New York State must be reported to the NYS Spill Hotline (1-800-457-7362) within 2 hours of discovery, except spills which meet all of the following criteria:

1. The quantity is known to be less than 5 gallons,
2. The spill is contained and under the control of the spiller,
3. The spill has not and will not reach the State's water or any land*,
4. The spill is cleaned up within 2 hours of discovery.

"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."

TREE RELATED DISEASES TO WATCH

By Teresa Link, Intern

Oak wilt is a disease that affects all oak trees, at varying rates, depending on the oak species. The red oak group seems to be impacted more than the white oak group. Oak wilt was first found in Wisconsin during the 1940s, but it is not known where it originated. Currently in NYS, it is contained to 4 areas: Canandaigua, Glenville, Brooklyn, and Long Island. Oak wilt is caused by a fungus that develops in the water carrying cells of the tree that disrupts the flow of water and nutrients to the leaves, causing the leaves to wilt and die. Oak wilt is spread by roots connecting from tree to tree underground or by insects spreading the fungus' spores to other oak trees. Typically the leaves of the oak tree will wilt or drop in late summer if infected. Red oaks can die within 2-6 weeks of initial infection and white oaks may take 1-10 years to die. Fungicides as a chemical control can keep the tree from dying but the tree will still be infected with the fungus. What can you do?- Do not prune oak trees from March to September. If you do prune an oak, paint the cut with latex paint to deter insects from feeding on the sap and spreading the fungus spores to the open cut.



Symptomatic leaves from an oak wilt infected tree. Source: NYS DEC

INVASIVE SPECIES TO WATCH

Invasive species are a growing problem across the United States. More and more invasive species are showing up each year and devastating natural populations. At OCSWCD we have two invasive species programs in place, Emerald Ash Borer (EAB) and Water Chestnut. Besides those invasive species, there are a few other invasive species and diseases in the state you should know about and look for:

Asian long hornedbeetle	Giant hogweed	Eurasian boar	Oak wilt
Hemlock woolly adelgid	Spotted lanternfly	Sirex woodwasp	Gypsy moth
Viburnum leaf beetle	Slender false brome	Japanese knotweed	Wild parsnip
Didymo (rock snot)	Hydrilla	Eurasian water-milfoil	Starry stonewort
Chinese Mitten crab	Northern snakehead fish	Sea lamprey	Spiny waterflea
Round goby	Zebra mussel		



Hemlock Woolly Adelgid - Source: Connecticut Agriculture Experiment Station, Bugwood.org



Spotted Lanternfly - Source: Lawrence Barringer, Pennsylvania Department of Agriculture, bugwood.org

For more information, please visit the websites below:

<http://nyis.info/>

https://www.dec.ny.gov/docs/lands_forests_pdf/isprohibitedplants2.pdf

<https://www.dec.ny.gov/animals/265.html>

The Onondaga County Soil & Water Conservation District prohibits discrimination in all its programs and activities on the basis of race, color, national origin, gender, religion, age, disability, political beliefs, sexual orientation, and marital or family status.

ROAD SAFETY TIPS

By Alex Fisher, District Conservation Technician

April signals the start of spring, better road conditions, and construction season. With the change in weather and road conditions it is the responsibility of both drivers and workers to be conscious of one another for the safety of the traveling public.

The best tool for workers doing roadside work is visibility. Personal Protective Equipment (PPE), such as bright reflective vests and hard hats make the presence of workers more apparent to motorists. It is important to raise the awareness of drivers and to control the flow of traffic through the proper use of cones and signage. The start and ending points of construction areas should be clearly marked with roadside signs to give advance warning of changing traffic conditions and work zones should be bordered by safety cones. Additionally, workers should always be aware of onsite conditions, whether it be avoiding vehicle blind spots or remembering to keep hydrated in the warm summer months.

Drivers can do several things to prepare themselves for varying travel conditions. When moving through a work zone, drivers should avoid all distractions that may divert their attention from the road. To protect workers, motorists should afford them as much extra room as possible, slow down, and be prepared to stop. It is also prudent to move into open lanes early and to be mindful of larger vehicles by keeping a safe distance. Lastly, travelers should pay attention to signage and workers directing traffic, as these provide vital information on road conditions onsite.



AG EQUIPMENT RENTAL

By Eric Jensen, Resource Conservation Specialist

The ag equipment rental program continues to make no-till technology available to farms in the watershed and around Onondaga County again this spring. The 12-foot ESCH no-till drill is available to rent at \$11/acre on a first come first served basis to qualified farmers with a 100 hp tractor with 2 pairs of hydraulic hose connections. A certificate of liability insurance is also required. The swing drawbar opens the drill to a full 12 feet working width in the field and then swings 90 degrees to allow easy transport on the roadways.

For more information on ag equipment rental, contact the SLWAP office located at 6680 Onondaga Lake Parkway, Liverpool, phone number (315) 457-0325.



No-till 12 foot working drill.



Drill in transport mode.

“IF YOU EAT, THANK A FARMER!”

SEASON'S GIVING

By Alex Fisher, Conservation District Technician



District staff gave generously and put together two boxes of staple foods for a local food pantry in December. Here is Alex preparing to deliver the food to St. Lucy's Pantry, Syracuse in time for the holidays.

TO THE CAPITOL

By Mark Burger, Executive Director



Members of the District Board of Directors and Skaneateles Watershed Program Review Committee and staff traveled to Albany to meet with local and state representatives. Every year, Soil & Water Conservation Districts across the state commit a full day to thank officials for their support to Districts and to discuss current issues surrounding conservation efforts in each of their counties.

(L-R) Rich Abbott, City of Syracuse Dept of Water, Ron May, District Conservation Technician, Brian Reeves, Onondaga County Farm Bureau; Mike McMahon, owner/operator of E-Z Acres farm and Chair of the Watershed Review Committee; Danielle Volles and Dan Palladino, both representing Onondaga County Farm Bureau.

ONONDAGA COUNTY SOIL & WATER CONSERVATION DISTRICT

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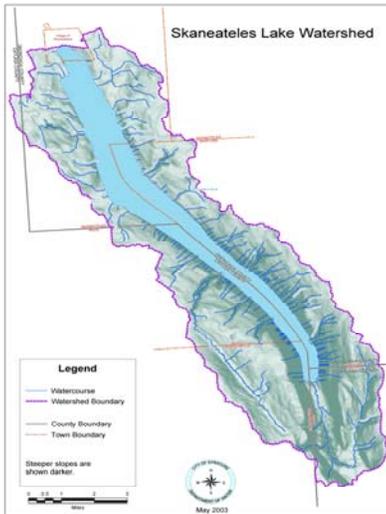


**IN CASE OF AN AG SPILL EMERGENCY
PLEASE CALL MARK BURGER**

315-415-5057

WATERSHED RUNOFF FACTS

By Eric Jensen, Resource Conservation Specialist



Protecting the water quality of Skaneateles Lake is essential for healthy drinking water and the future of the local communities. It has been a priority for the City of Syracuse and the Skaneateles Lake Watershed Ag Program (SLWAP) for 25 years. One of SLWAPs primary goals is reducing nutrients and pathogens in stormwater

runoff from farms and agricultural crop fields. This ongoing work is accomplished by improved nutrient management plans and installation of conservation practices, also called best management practices

The statement that *80 percent of the phosphorus that flows into Skaneateles Lake comes from farms* referenced in a local newspaper article on February 19, 2019 should be clarified with the fact that it is an estimate from a simple watershed model tool that uses average values and does not include any ag BMPs or any other nutrient reduction measures.

(BMP), where needed. This conservation work on farms is voluntary and goes mostly unseen and has been under reported. Much of the local community is unaware of the significant investment by the City, the many public grant funds, and the work by ag professionals on the land.

Recently the NYS DEC has developed a 'Skaneateles Lake HAB Action Plan' in response to the September 2017 Harmful Algal Bloom. This plan uses

a Loading Estimator of Nutrient Sources (LENS) tool in a simple watershed model to estimate assumed average values during assumed weather conditions. The LENS screening tool is not designed to be used as a comprehensive watershed analysis. In fact, the LENS does NOT take into consideration any nutrient reduction BMPs or many other sources within the watershed. Therefore, this analysis for Skaneateles Lake annual phosphorus loading from nonpoint sources presented in the HAB Action Plan should be considered a **preliminary approximation**. The LENS estimate for Agricultural land = 80% should be interpreted with caution.

NYS DEC is in the process of developing a more advanced model to accurately represent the existing BMPs and other nutrient reduction measures implemented by farms, Soil & Water Conservation Districts, and other stakeholders.

If you have any questions, please give the SLWAP office a call at (315) 457-0325.

WATCH FOR NEW COVER CROP SIGNS

COVER CROPS

for **CLEANER WATER**
HEALTHIER SOILS

NY's Farmers in partnership with Soil & Water Conservation Districts
Cayuga, Cortland, Onondaga, Seneca & Tompkins Counties

NEW YORK
Department of
Environmental
Conservation

NEW YORK
Agriculture
and Markets

NEW YORK
Soil and Water
Conservation
Committee



Our vision - The Skaneateles Lake watershed will be an environmentally sound region, where a viable agricultural industry and others benefiting from the lake work together harmoniously to improve and maintain a high standard of water quality.

Our mission - To carry out a cost-effective, innovative program for the farming community that upholds the high drinking water quality standards of Skaneateles Lake.

WASTE TIRE RECYCLING

By Eric Jensen, Resource Conservation specialist

Waste tires have been used extensively on dairy farm bunk silos to hold down plastic film tarps for years. This has been a beneficial use determination (BUD) by the NYS DEC pursuant to 6 NYCRR 360-1.15(d) for a reasonable number of tires to be used for this common practice.



The NYS DEC Part 360 enforcement deadline is **May 3, 2019**, based on the Enforcement Discretion Letter dated March 1, 2018. According to current NYS DEC regulations, transporting used or waste tires is a regulated waste that requires a 6 NYCRR Part 364 Waste Transporter Per-

mit. A Part 364 permit application includes a \$500 fee plus proof of Worker's Compensation Insurance.

A One-year waiver for farms to transport waste tires, without a Part 364 Permit requirement, to processing facilities would be very helpful. This would reduce farm expense to comply with the law and help with compliance. Grant funds for tire collection on farms would be greatly extended to cover more farms due to the farmer match that they could provide. We are working with NYS elected officials and the Onondaga County Farm Bureau on this initiative

SOIL TESTING TO HELP LAWN FERTILIZER RECOMMENDATIONS

Staff from the Skaneateles Lake Watershed Agricultural Program are offering to assist residential home owners for soil sampling and laboratory analysis services on a limited basis. The goal of these services is to determine if residential lawns require fertilization as part of the efforts to help protect water quality and to be as proactive as possible to protect against further Harmful Algal Blooms in our lakes. Staff will come to your residence, teach and explain how to sample the soil, and then send the it to the laboratory for analysis; results will be sent to both the homeowner and the SLWAP. **IF** the soil test shows that fertilization of the lawn is needed, the results and recommendations will be reviewed with the homeowner. Fertilizer spreader calibration assistance will be provided as necessary. Please know that preference will be given to near shore residences and those closest to water courses (streams, wetlands). Funding for this program is provided on Skaneateles Lake is provided by the City of Syracuse Watershed Agricultural Program. Additional funding is provided by the Onondaga County Soil & Water Conservation District's Part C funding allotment. If interested in this program please call the SLWAP office at 315-457-0325 and ask for a SLWAP staff member.

SKANEATELES LAKE

WATERSHED

AGRICULTURAL PROGRAM

Watershed Agricultural Program Review Committee (WAPRC)

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Steve Nemece, *Vice Chair, Cayuga Co.*
Craig Richards, *Onondaga Co.*
Tim Leubner, *Onondaga Co.*
Eric Brayman, *Onondaga Co.*
David Perry, *Cortland Co.*
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Rich Abbott, *City of Syracuse*
Jim Greenfield, *Counsel member*
Dale Kehoe, *Counsel member*

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Mark Burger, *Program Manager*
Kim Clark, *District Conservation Technician*
Eric Jensen, *Farm & Nutrient Mgmt Planner*

Phone: 315-457-0325
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Website: www.ocswcd.org



(315) 477-0124

The Skaneateles Lake Watershed Agricultural Program is a cooperative effort between the Soil & Water Conservation Districts and Cornell Cooperative Extension Associations of Onondaga, Cortland and Cayuga Counties, the USDA Natural Resources Conservation Service, the City of Syracuse, and Skaneateles Lake watershed farmers. Principal funding provided by the City of Syracuse.



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